ALMOST PERFECT: THE CRASH OF A PARK AVENUE POWER COUPLE

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MARCH 9, 1998

NEW YORK

WHERE TO HAVE A PARTY NOW

BY RUTH J. KATZ

PLUS BAR MITZVAH MANIA

BY RALPH GARDNER JR.

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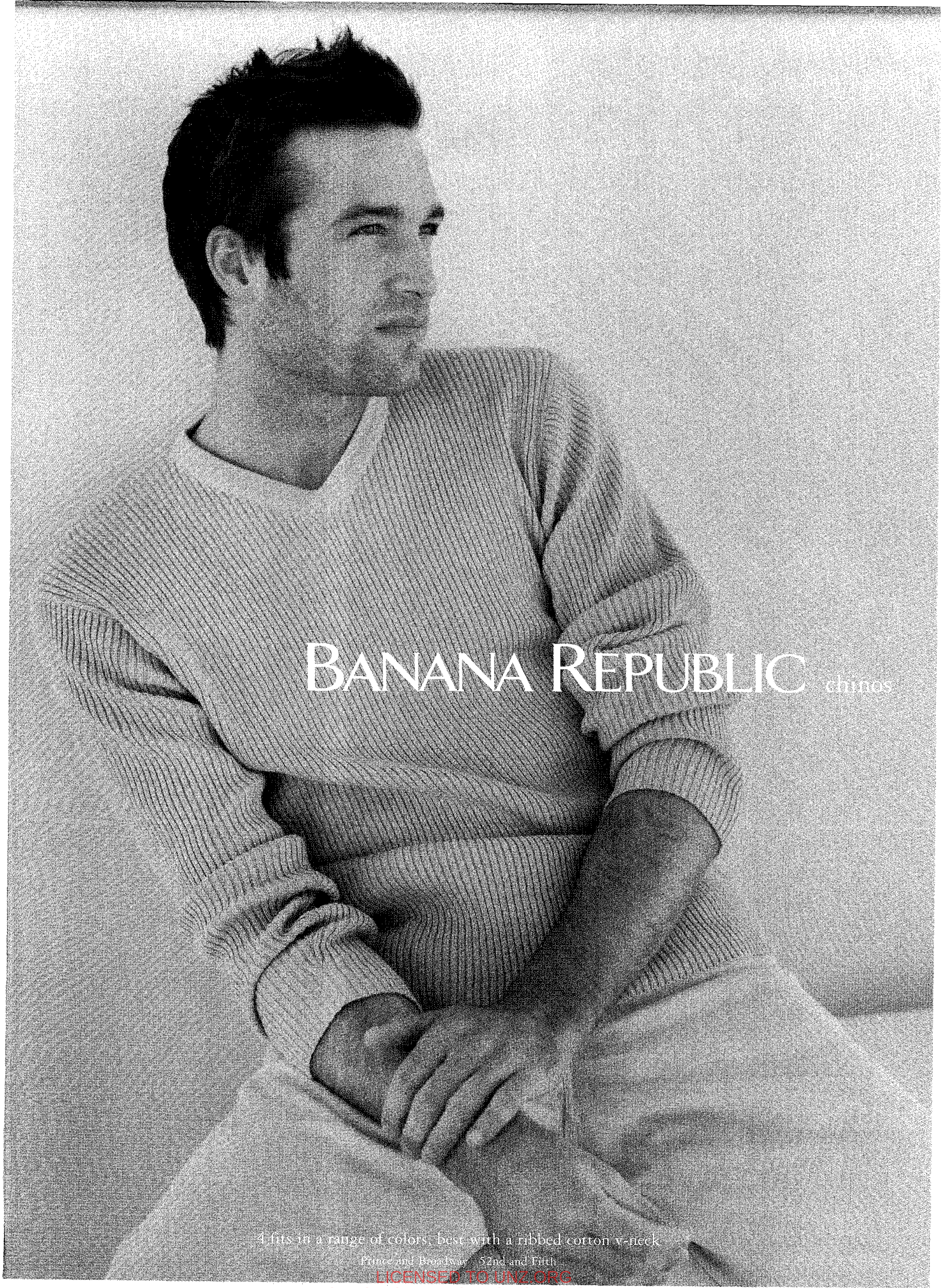
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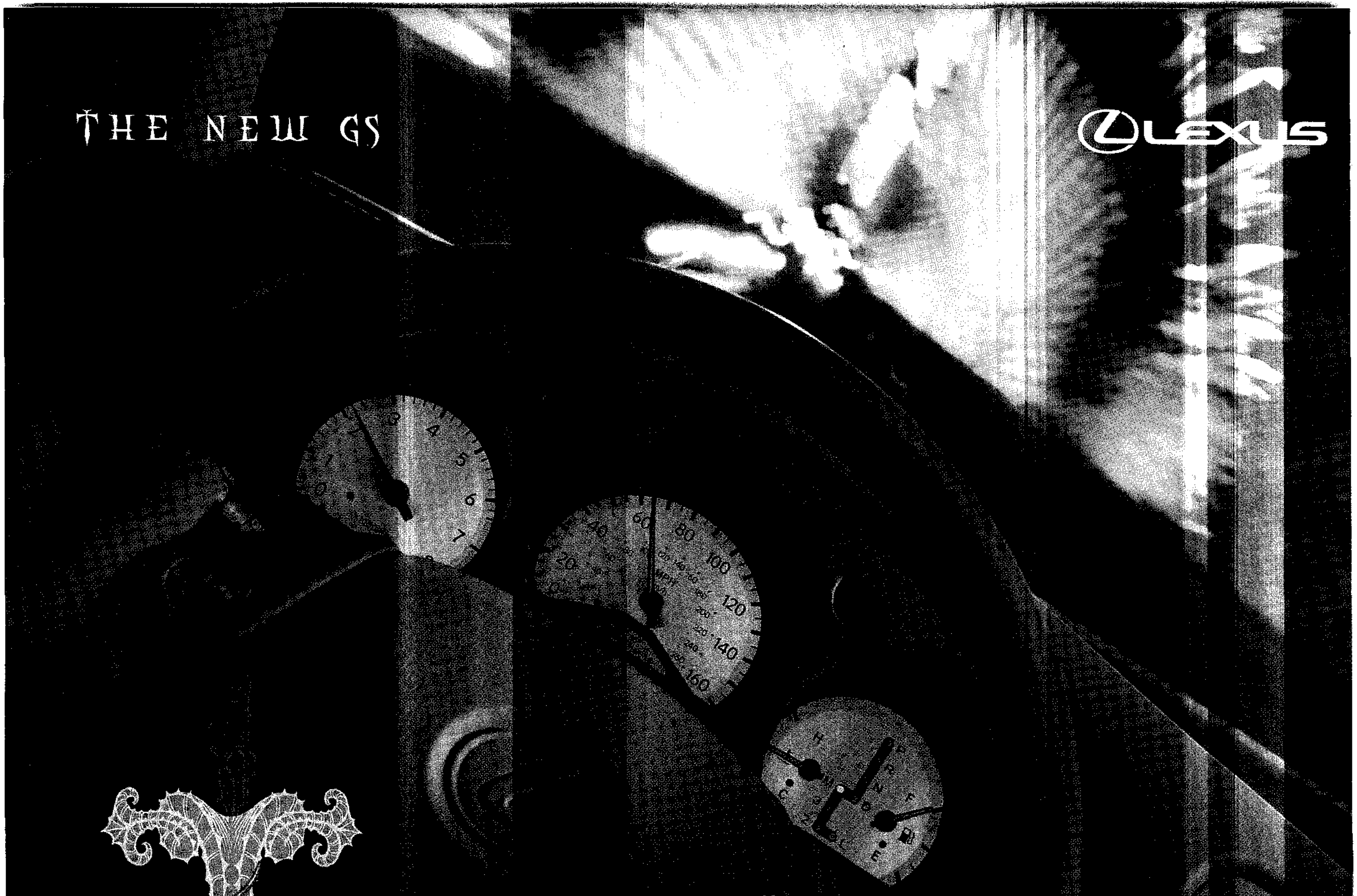

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>
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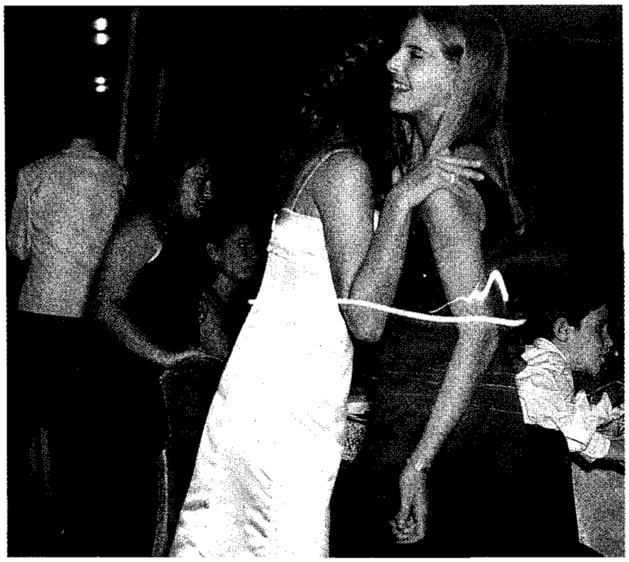

20 Lucky Thirteen

By Ralph Gardner Jr.

One proud father rented Radio City Music Hall for the night, another the *Intrepid* (with Natalie Cole as headliner). Extravagant bar (and bas) mitzvah bashes are booming right along with the stock market. As rabbis struggle to focus on the religious event, party planners with quarter-million-dollar budgets compete to keep jaded teenagers engaged. (Note: the Grucci fireworks barge starts at $20,000.)

27 Fête Accompli

By Ruth J. Katz

You're ready to party, and the occasion calls for a place that will surprise your cohorts and show off your good taste. Whether you're hosting a handful of friends for your 30th or 300 of your nearest and dearest for a smashing wedding, here are dozens of spaces that will make your party memorable. From Romanesque ballrooms to mannequin-filled lofts, we've scouted the best Manhattan has to offer.

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By Ruth G. Davis and Beth Landman Keil

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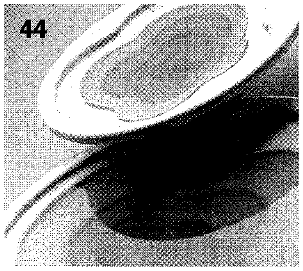

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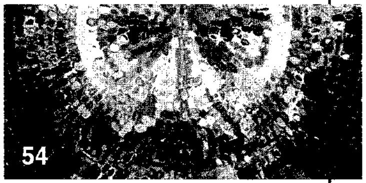

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Cover: Photograph by Rafael Fuchs. Fashion styling by Lisa von Weise/Marek; prop styling by Leah Levin; hair by John Birchall/Jam Arts; makeup by Trina Cooper/Jam Arts. Front couple: On her, dress by Richard Tyler, jacket by John Bartlett; on him, shirt by Paul Smith. Rear couple: On her, dress by Istante; on him, suit by Paul Smith. Waiter: tuxedo shirt by Armani, gloves by La Crasia. Hors d'oeuvre by Neuman & Bogdonoff; tray by Calvin Klein Home. Models, from left: Kevin Robbins/McDonald-Richards; Megan Sheekey; Robert Christensen; Guy Hadley/McDonald-Richards; Montse Anda/Ford.

Photographs: clockwise from top, Dana Lixenberg; Bill Jacobson, courtesy of PaceWildenstein Gallery; Steve Wisbauer.

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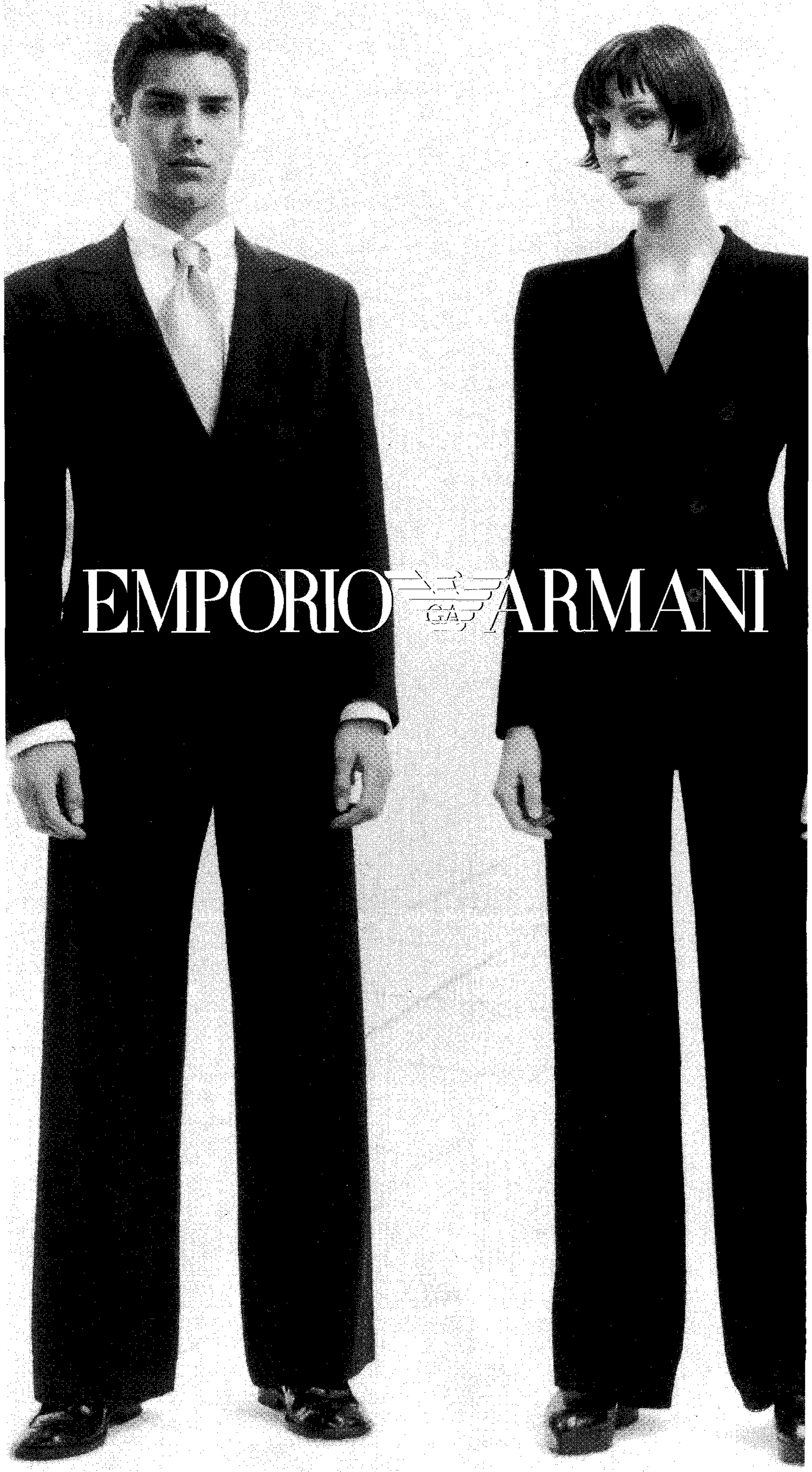

Little White (House) Lies?

Oiling Clinton's new -gate; laying claim to the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.; counting the limos outside '21.'

THAT MONICA LEWINSKY IS NOT WAtergate, as Hanna Rosin suggests, has become a sort of nervously repeated mantra among Bill Clinton's partisans, who labor mightily to convince us they have no ax to grind in so saying ["Free Willy," February 9]. Tricky Dick deserved to get it in the neck, but Bill is just a naughty boy with loins afire. Perhaps, but if the president did suborn perjury, it is hard to see why he shouldn't be impeached. I'm no fan of the hard-right types currently licking their chops, but I can't help noting the title of Rosin's regular column: If stemming the tide of sleaze in the executive branch (I refer to Travelgate and Filegate as well as Penisgate) is not in "the national interest," what is?

Jeffrey M. Gross
BROOKLYN

THIS JUST IN: MEN LUST AFTER WOMEN! STAY tuned for salacious details! What if the press had had the temerity to badger JFK about his sexual adventures? His first response would probably have been to wittily turn the question aside: "Why don't you ask if I'm still beating my wife?" or "I've always wanted to ask *you* that, Sam." If pressed, he might have lied. Having thus been forced into a crime against the people, would he have resigned? Would we have been the richer for it? We'll just have to wait for the media and Washington holier-than-thous to realize that people don't care who a president is screwing as long as it isn't them.

Ed Schultz
MANHATTAN

Ifs and Ands on Butts

YOUR JANUARY 26 COVER STORY ["WHICH Would You Choose, Dr. King?"] was both distressing and insulting—distressing in that Craig Horowitz is not perceptive enough to understand the dynamics of community in African-American life; insulting because the media in the majority community remain arrogant and presumptuous. How could Horowitz or any other white journalist of this generation have a clue as to whom Martin Luther King Jr. would choose? The implicit insinuation is that the so-called new leadership in Harlem must fit a profile designed by *New York* Magazine or someone else in the majority community. And though I do not mean to suggest that Calvin Butts's contributions are insignificant in the redevelopment of Harlem, Al Sharpton would win hands-down if Dr. King were picking a role model for human-rights leadership in this desperate era of black struggle. As Dr. King's onetime chief of staff, I consider Butts more of a political operative than a human-rights activist. We need both.

There is no question that Butts is politically astute. His recent association with George Pataki and Alphonse D'Amato, however, has raised some eyebrows as to where his fundamental allegiance lies. As for his future in elective politics, which you are clearly trumpeting, his biggest hurdle is getting the broad support of the congregation he serves. He has been dubbed the Lone Ranger by his colleagues in ministry because of his gross lack of collegiality. I do not think his political moment is at hand. It is my hope that he will continue in his aggressive efforts to redevelop our community physically; he has made a significant start in this arena and has been very skillful and productive in the alliances he has made to effect some changes the Harlem community sorely needs. Elective office might dilute his usefulness.

The next time you wish to print a commentary on human-rights leadership in the African-American community in New York or anywhere else, you should do your homework.

Wyatt Tee Walker
Senior Pastor
Canaan Baptist Church of Christ
NEW YORK CITY

Craig Horowitz responds: If Mr. Walker feels his point of view was not adequately represented in the article, it could be because he failed to return my phone calls. It saddens me that Walker, who stood so valiantly by Martin Luther King's side, has chosen to disqualify me, as a "white journalist," from understanding issues in the black community. This seems an odd way to honor the memory of Dr. King, who fought to have people judged "not by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

Comfort Zone

I WAS DEEPLY TROUBLED BY JOHN SIMON'S review of *Shopping and Fucking* ["Theater: Troubled Waters," February 16]. I am a struggling young playwright, and Simon, in his review, sends a horrifying message to those of us who are currently unproduced: *Don't write anything that will make me feel uncomfortable.* Simon's only critique of this play rests in his discussion of Mark Ravenhill's choice of subject matter, which, granted, is truly abhorrent. Yet an artist's subject, whether delightful or loathsome, is not the basis on which a play should be judged. Simon writes nothing of Ravenhill's splendid use of dramatic action, the balance of potential bliss and current despair that propels his characters to their horrifying ends. Simon is a critic, not a censor, and American theater would be much better off if he would remember that.

Kara E. Hartig
MANHATTAN

Star Power

I WAS APPALLED BY HAL RUBENSTEIN'S REview of the '21' Club ["Restaurants: '21' of a Kind," February 9]. I am no regular of the place, but my visits there have been exemplary dining experiences. Rubenstein's misguided comment about its having lost its cachet as a seat of power illustrates just how little time he spends in the proximity of the restaurant. Having worked one street north of '21' for the past three years, I know that there never fails to be a clog of limousines jamming the front of the restaurant during my daily lunchtime walks. Obviously, for quite a few people, dining at the '21' Club is still an exceptional encounter with New York history and good eating.

John D. Alexander
MANHATTAN

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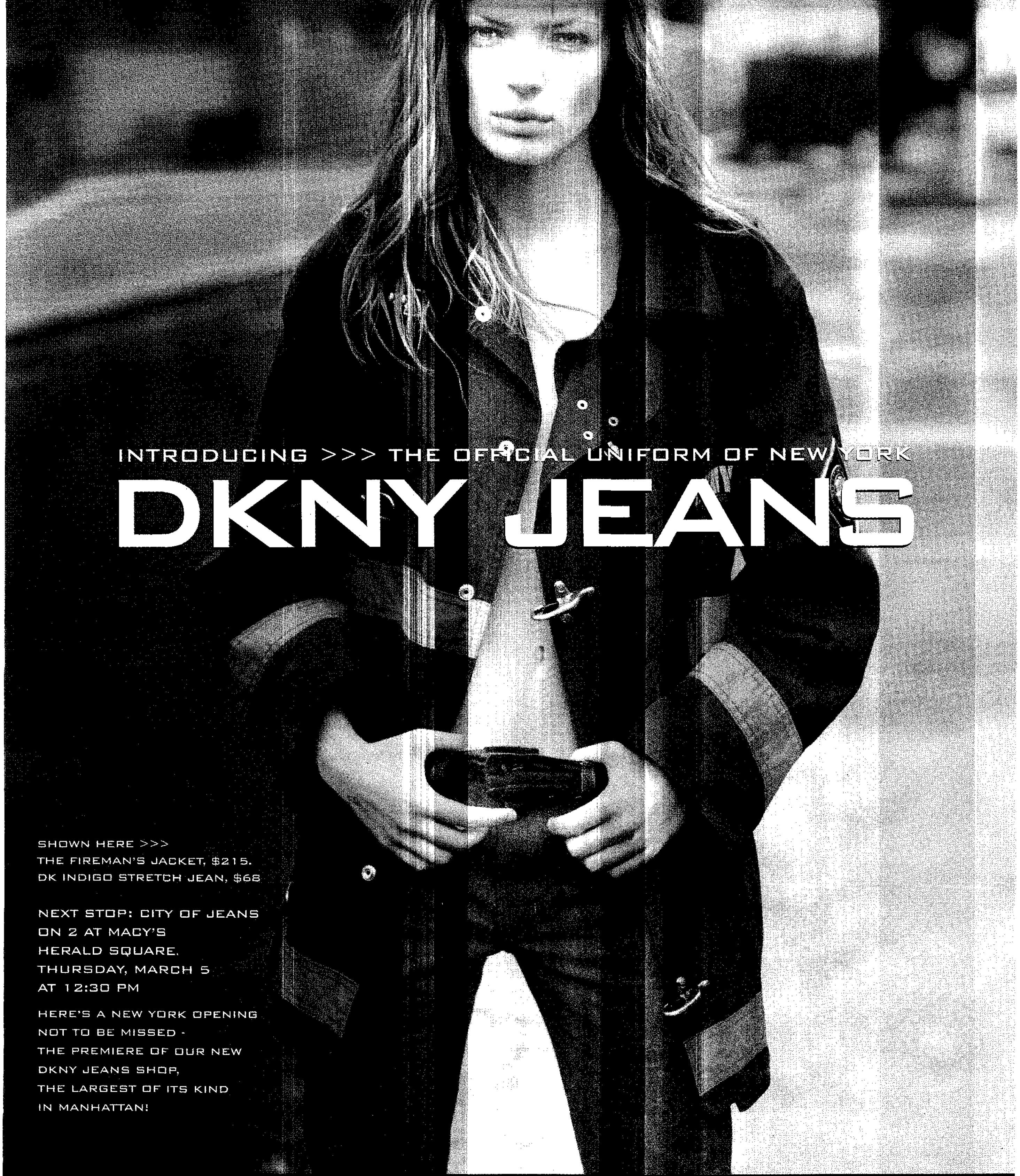

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BY BETH LANDMAN KEIL AND DEBORAH MITCHELL

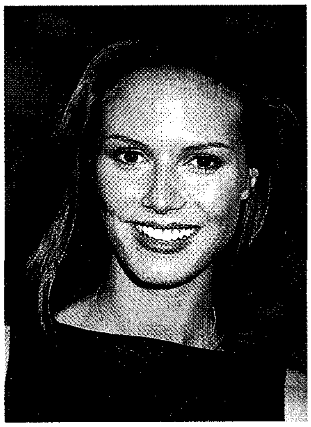
INTELLIGENCER

OVERPECK: NO MORE HORSING AROUND

New York's equestrian elite are finding the conditions at Overpeck Riding Center, an exclusive riding facility in New Jersey, less than stable now that president **Paul Novograd** has lost his lease. Bergen County officials say Overpeck has fallen into serious disrepair since Novograd, who also runs Manhattan's Claremont Riding Academy, took it over ten years ago. According to Overpeck instructors, Novograd has turned the ring into a "danger pit" for riders, instructors, and horses. "The footing is awful—the ground is way too hard. Horses are skidding and pinning people underneath," says one stable insider. Another pro was recently kicked in the head by an unmanageable pony and suffered permanent hearing loss; two other instructors recently suffered a concussion and a knee injury, respectively. After problems at the facility were detailed in the Bergen County *Record,* Novograd wrote a rebuttal letter to his clients, pointing out numerous improvements he's made and boasting of his excellent safety record. Novograd considers the complaints smear tactics orchestrated by those hoping he'll lose the Overpeck lease—namely, **David Boley,** the former head instructor who recently resigned. "I believe that a deliberate campaign is being waged to malign us," says Novograd, who did not bid at all for a lease renewal. (**Rusty Holzer**, who put in a bid to gain control of Claremont in 1996, recently placed the highest bid of $266,000 a year for Overpeck; neither Holzer nor Boley could be reached.) "If we didn't run a safe operation, we never could have stayed in business all these years. I am appalled," says Novograd. "This is why people prefer animals."

HAIR TODAY, COVER TOMORROW

The recent *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue may have featured models posing with their athlete-superstar husbands, but not all of the bikini-clad beauties have such prominent spouses. **Heidi Klum,** the issue's comely 23-year-old cover girl, is married not to a celebrity but to a low-profile Manhattan hairstylist she met through friends. Last summer, Klum wed **Ric Pipino,** a fortyish Australian who works at the chic Warren-Tricomi salon. "Well, it's hard to find a straight hairdresser, you know," says **Edward Tricomi,** the salon's co-owner, who describes the mustached Pipino as having a "Three Musketeers vibe." Apparently, appearances don't concern the couple much. "They're not the typical model pairing, thank God," says Tricomi. "Ric is just a great guy—he's the Spanky of our gang. They really needed each other."



Heidi Klum:
A cut above

Rosanna Scotto:
Out of the loop

A VICIOUS CIRCLE AT CHANNEL 5

There will be fewer nosy reporters for **Rudy Giuliani** to worry about at this year's Inner Circle dinner. The purpose of the annual fête is to bring together reporters and politicians, but this year the correspondents at WNYW–Channel 5 won't be getting that chance. The station's news director, **Gail Yancosek,** has invited only behind-the-scenes staff to attend the dinner this week, denying tickets to on-air talent such as co-anchors **Rosanna Scotto** and **John Roland.** "There's a tremendous amount of anger in the newsroom over this," says one studio insider. A spokesperson for Yancosek said she has a "policy" to use *all* public events as "a thank you to behind-the-scenes personnel." Scoffs another set-side source, "What about a thank you to the people in the newsroom?" Yancosek may have less than altruistic motives; one of her invitees is **Ron Magocsi,** a WNYW engineer who also happens to be her boyfriend. "So now she's invited some of his engineering friends so he won't feel left out," says another insider. "She has no idea what she's doing. This is just another sign that she doesn't have a clue."

LAW AND DISORDER AT NYU

The students at New York University's law school are already learning a thing or two about how rules can be bent. When the results of the housing lottery were announced earlier this month, all eight of Dean **John Sexton's** second-year teaching assistants came out in the top thirteen, guaranteeing them housing and a first crack at the coveted nicest rooms. Some of the less lucky students raised eyebrows and questions—and it turns out that the lottery was, in fact, rigged. **Marguerite Sharkey,** who runs the school's housing department, admitted that her office "bounced" Sexton's TAs to the top of the list, on the grounds that they needed to be close to the school to keep up with the dean's demanding schedule. She told the school paper, *The Commentator,* that it was a "mistake" and "an embarrassment" that "will not happen again." Says Sexton: "I didn't know, and the students didn't know," although he said his TAs had joked about the coincidence to him after the results came

Photographs by Rose Hartman/Globe Photos.

CARTER'S PROVIDENTIAL ROMANCE

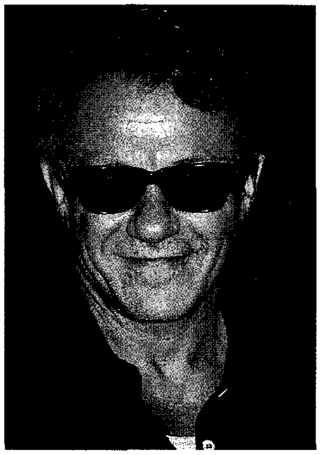
Can Pamela Harriman's shoes ever be filled? Her last squire, **J. Carter Brown,** evidently has moved on: The former head of Washington's National Gallery of Art is now seeing the rich divorcée (and former *House & Garden* editor) **Nancy Richardson.** The new couple have had lunch at Sag Harbor's American Hotel and gone to parties together, social sources report. Now the betting is that Richardson will quickly try to unload Napier House, the historic $1.1 million Sag Harbor mansion she bought just last year and was planning to restore. "She's been seeing Carter Brown for about four or five months," reports one of Richardson's friends. "I can't imagine he'd have any part of Sag Harbor." Brown (of the Brown University Browns) summers religiously in Newport, Rhode Island. But Richardson's real-estate agent insists that her Sag Harbor house is not on the market—yet.

out. The dean remained judicious, saying about the incident, "We all make mistakes" and "It won't happen again."

CINDY'S NEWS; HARVEY SUES

CINDY SWITCHES: Gossip addicts may have to change their morning routines this summer. Dish diva **Cindy Adams** recently lunched with ABC chairman **Roone Arledge** at Picholine; the two are in discussions about Adams changing channels, leaving behind her weekly appearances on NBC's *Today* show and appearing on ABC's *Good Morning America* three times a week. "There have been a lot of meetings, but nothing has been finalized yet," says Adams. "So far, I've had a lot of nice lunches." But Adams is already getting to know her potential studiomates: "Next up, I'm having lunch with [*GMA* anchor] **Lisa McCree,**" she reports.

BOESKY'S DEED: Harvey Keitel, who led the fight to get the perc-using dry cleaner out of the storefront of his North Moore Street condo, has quietly sold that loft. **Ivan Boesky's** daughter, **Marianne,** now owns the apartment, which Keitel held title to for almost three years but never moved into. Which doesn't mean that he's not fighting with his contractor over the place: On February 18, Keitel's attorney, **Tom Harvey,** filed suit for $75,000 with interest, alleging that Martin Grady Contracting "failed to perform any renovation or construction work at the apartment." This was after Keitel had delivered a $125,000 check up front for the work (of which Grady returned $50,000), the suit alleges.



Harvey Keitel: Well suited

MANAGER SHEARED: Harry Shearer's small role in **Jim Carrey's** upcoming *The Truman Show* morphed into a *Details* feature when the actor, most famous for playing Derek Smalls in *Spinal Tap,* penned a set diary. But despite all the exposure Shearer has been getting—he also plays an anchorman in the upcoming *Godzilla*—he's just fired his longtime manager, **Harriet Sternberg.** Sternberg evidently incurred her client's wrath when she conveyed both the producer's and her own dissatisfaction with Shearer's *Details* diary, which included droll asides about his Teamster driver, the lack of 24-hour room service at his hotel, and the difficulties of flying into Seaside, Florida. "When people start complaining about the food that's outside of L.A. and New York, what can I tell you?" says peeved producer **Ed Feldman.** "*I* didn't lose any weight [on location]." Shearer insists that his manager's reaction to the *Details* story was not "a factor of any significance" in his decision to leave Sternberg. "I had twelve years with Harriet, and I wish her well," he adds. Sternberg refused to comment.

THE LAST WORD: The late *Hill* reporter **Sandy Hume** had just finished his first feature for *George* magazine before his February 22 suicide. The topic? **Bill Paxon.** Hume, the 28-year-old son of Fox News's **Brit Hume,** made news last year when he broke the story that the Buffalo congressman was part of a group trying to oust House leader **Newt Gingrich.** Hume's recent work on former congresswoman **Susan Molinari's** husband analyzes the congressman's political origins and future, according to *George* senior editor **Richard Blow.** "It is more or less finished," Blow confirmed. "We really haven't come to a decision about what to do with the story, because we're all still in a state of shock, frankly. When the time comes to make that decision, we will of course want to talk to the Humes and respect their wishes."

Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel: Sand castle?

Additional reporting by Kate Coyne and Emily Spilko.

A SQUALL HITS HAMPTONS REAL ESTATE

El Niño's storms are of more than passing interest to **Carl** and **Barbaralee Diamonstein-Spielvogel.** When **Jim Brady** asked Barbaralee whether her oceanfront home was still standing, she "shuddered visibly" and said, "I can't even talk about it," according to Brady's report in *Crain's New York Business.* The New York *Times's* Long Island edition reported that the Spielvogels' Southampton mansion was "among the hardest hit" in the recent storms. But **Gil Flanagan,** a lawyer who works for the Spielvogels, insists that a thirties bulkhead protects the dunes in front of his clients' home. The issue is currently a hot topic in the Hamptons, since the Spielvogels had just negotiated to sell their home for about $13 million when the storms hit, according to local sources. And the coverage that followed came before the buyers—Paris-based **John** and **Louise McBain** (who founded Hebdo, an international chain of classified-ad publications known as shoppers)—had closed on the deal. Now the entire matter is with the lawyers, according to one source close to the deal. Flanagan, citing a confidentiality clause in the contract, refused to discuss it at all; neither the Spielvogels nor the McBains returned calls.

Photographs: top, Rose Hartman/Globe Photos; center, Gregory Pace/Sygma.

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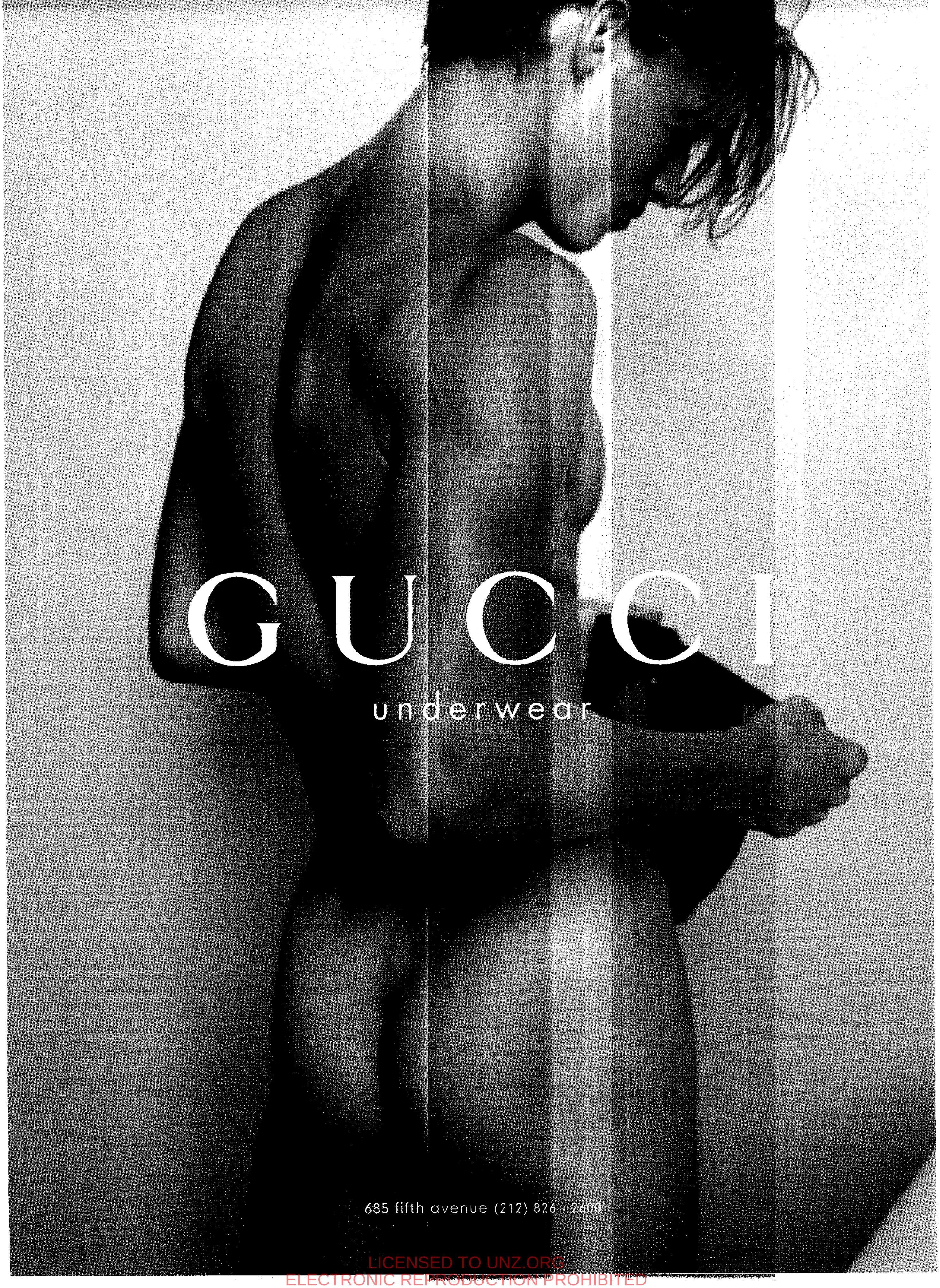
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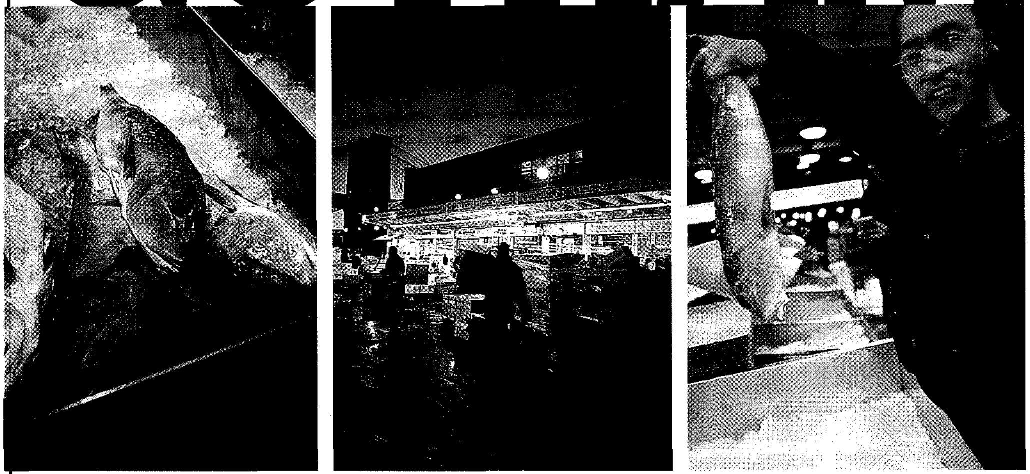
THE GREAT SMOKE ITSELF—*HARVEY SHAPIRO*

GOTHAM



Tilefish on sale at the Fulton Fish Market in lower Manhattan.

Last Fish in the Sea

Chefs shun swordfish: Will they turn up their noses at tilefish?

EARLY IN FEBRUARY, DICK Bahr, the owner of the *Snoopy II*, changed a few leaders and hooks and turned his swordfish long-liner into a tilefish boat. He's made the shift a few times in the past—when the market price of his primary catch dipped too low—but this time, there were other forces at work. After many years of trendiness and prestige, swordfish is now being boycotted by elegant Manhattan restaurants, where chefs are concerned that it's becoming endangered. Worse still for people like Bahr, Washington is expected to enact regulations protecting fish that have until now been all but ignored. Like other boats that run out of Shinnecock Inlet on Long Island, the *Snoopy II* is now trying to find a way to survive.

Out on the docks, the swordfish boycott has been greeted with nothing but disdain. "It's horseshit," says Artie Surrey, the *Snoopy II*'s captain. "Yes, swordfish's been fished pretty hard, but it's no endangered fish." But Manhattan chefs and their more eco-conscious patrons believe they're just doing their part for the planet. "We are giving a one-year break to the sword," says Eric Ripert of Le Bernardin. "It's more like helping the fish and putting a little pressure on Washington."

As the dense, oily swords disappear from menus, fishermen are hoping to replace them with species whose low culinary profile has kept them below the government's radar. In Montauk, an early contender is the humble, mud-burrowing tilefish. You've probably already encountered it as a coffee shop's specialty from the grill, or masquerading as red snapper in a

(continued on page 14)

SPIN CYCLE

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF P.R.

Civil Disobedience

- "Mr. Giuliani said again that he would not talk to Mr. Greene [the Grammys honcho who shouted at a mayoral aide] until he had heard genuine contrition instead of a 'phony apology.' "
  —*New York* Times
- "If you want to abuse a member of my staff, abuse me and see if you get away with it."
  —*Mayor Giuliani*
- "Greene insisted that he spoke to the mayoral aide 'in a very civil manner.' "
  —*New York* Post
- "We are big supporters of Giuliani. . . . We're very hopeful that we can kiss and make up soon."
  —*Michael Greene*
- "It was wrong of me to yell and scream at a member of your staff. . . . It was wrong of me to threaten to kill her . . . it's not going to happen again. . . . That apology, I accept in a second."
  —*Mayor Giuliani*
- "An apology is only sincere and real when it is given privately. Real grown up people handle things quietly. Apologies are not supposed to be media events."
  —*Letitia Baldrige, etiquette authority*

CAMEO

The Drudge Retort

THE TIMING, ONE HAD TO ADMIT, WAS INspired. The very day that New Yorkers awoke to read, with understandable disbelief, that henceforth their fellow citizens would be, *lemme get this straight*, polite and civilized, and would cease snickering or pointing or gossiping—that very day, they also learned that they'd soon be getting a new neighbor. Matt Drudge, the most unapologetically ill-mannered man in American journalism, let it be known that he'd soon be commuting from L.A. to tape a weekly talk show for the most unapologetically ill-mannered man in international journalism, Rupert Murdoch. Any way you look at it, it's enough to tip a city's etiquette balance into dangerous disequilibrium. Now *this* calls for some real municipal leadership. Our sweet little city's only hope is to quickly export some local nuisance. Too bad Joey Buttafuoco already went west.

Photographs: top, Ronnie Andren; bottom, Michael Caulfield/AP/Wide World.

Fish *continued from page 13*

Korean restaurant. But among higher-end seafood chefs, the tilefish has some serious deficiencies. "It varies in quality," says Stephen Lyle, chef and co-owner of Independent, who recently offered a special of baked tilefish with aïoli. "I don't buy it too often for that reason."

Tilefish also has P.R. problems. Chef Bobby Flay, who presides over the Mesa Grill restaurant empire, says, "It's a hard sell, because people don't recognize its name." Often diners will pass it over in favor of a fish with a flashier name—even a known junk fish like the orange roughy

Consumers are also finding it hard to give up the one fish that can survive being cooked like a steak. "A chef knows how to cook 40 kinds of fish. People do not," says Joe Gurrera, owner of Citarella. "They might take the swordfish because of the simplicity of cooking." Even Vice-President Gore, a crusader for biodiversity, spent Valentine's Day at a fund-raiser tucking into a swordfish feast for low-fat-cat party donors.

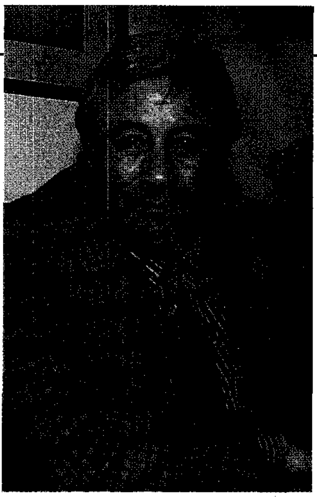
Whether or not the boycott succeeds, however, a bigger problem looms in the waters of the North Atlantic: Just about every familiar species of edible fish, from tuna to tilefish, is now officially classified as "overfished." By the end of this year, they'll all be subject to federal conservation strategies. Fishermen up and down the coast are bracing for the disastrous impact. "The only thing that's growing in this business are the regulations," says Bahr.

In the meantime, they're doing what they can to make ends meet, even if it means tilefish long-lining, which is one of the worst jobs around—endless hours and brutal winter weather. Not to mention the eels. Huge conger eels get trapped in the nets, and they've been known to wrap themselves around crew members' arms. And not let go. Still, the fishermen will take what they can get. "After a while," says one veteran fisherman, "it's just like any job, and you get into it, start bullshitting with the other guys. It's not so bad." Tom Gogola

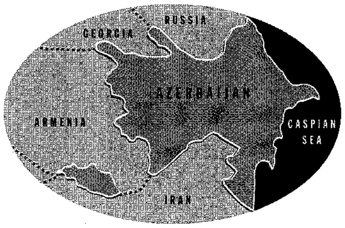
FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Exile on 57th St.

An Azerbaijani dissident plots his homecoming.



Rasul Guliyev, the former speaker of Azerbaijan's parliament.



Downing shot after shot of horseradish vodka at a posh midtown restaurant, Rasul Guliyev pauses to toast the large men standing near his table, hands tensed inside their coat pockets as they scan the room for trouble. "They are my armor," he says. In unison, they flash a row of gold-capped teeth.

Guliyev has good reason to be grateful for their presence. Ever since being exiled a year and a half ago from his homeland of Azerbaijan, the former speaker of the nation's parliament has ranked as Public Enemy No. 1 in the Central Asian republic. Recently, President Heydar Aliyev accused him of fomenting a coup and plotting to down the presidential jet with a Stinger missile. And now the dissident believes his life is in danger.

"He has assassinated his opponents in the past," Guliyev says of his accuser. "And he might again. America is such a large country. It is so easy to smuggle a killer in." As he finishes the sentence, the sound of a dish clattering makes his guards flinch.

The vendetta has taken its toll on Guliyev: There are bags under his eyes, and his large hands tremble slightly. But despite his personal fortune (rumored to have been amassed during his tenure at the state oil company) and his advancing age, he continues to campaign against Aliyev, a former KGB boss, with a Trotsky-like stubbornness. Guliyev plans to return to Azerbaijan and run for president in the fall. "Whatever the risk, I will take part," he says. "Ninety percent of the people support me."

When not indulging his fondness for vodka and caviar, Guliyev has been meeting with foreign dignitaries in New York and making the rounds in Washington, presenting himself as the Gorbachev of Central Asia and touting a book he's written on democracy. Though he is a man without a country, he claims to be getting a cordial reception—which may have something to do with the oil that lies under the Caspian Sea (the reserves are second only to the Persian Gulf's). Several senators, he says, have penciled him in for meetings, and he's planning to lecture in New York—all of which has put him in an expansive mood. Gesturing to the photographer who's about to take his picture, he says to me in Russian, "Tell her that she is more beautiful than her camera."

Then, summoning a waiter, he orders cognac. "The best," he stresses, "only the very best." After the ritual toast (to "friendship of nations" this time), he leans over to the photographer and invites her to join him on his trip back to Azerbaijan. "We need journalists to come along, to report the truth," he says. Seeing her hesitate, a bodyguard interrupts: "We'll be in the front of the plane," he says, patting a bulge under his jacket, "to ensure that there is no trouble."

Guliyev likes that. Beaming at her, he says, "It might be dangerous. But it will definitely be interesting." Vijai Maheshwari

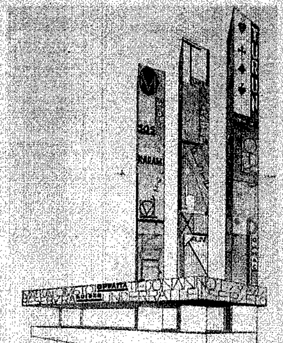
SITE LINES

Finn de Siècle

The Museum of Modern Art's retrospective on Alvar Aalto, subtitled "Between Humanism and Materialism," could as easily be called "Alvar Aalto: The Nice Modernist." After all, while Bauhaus ideologues were hammering out their rigorous aesthetic, the Finnish architect was trying to "humanize the age of machines." One might then expect a show as comfortable and familiar as the curves of his popular home furnishings.

The actual exhibition, however, is far less predictable. The biggest surprise is Aalto's kiosk (designed with Erik Bryggman) for the Turku 700th Anniversary Exhibition and Trade Fair, 1929. It's really little more than a sideshow booth topped with three tall, skinny, advertising saturated towers, a look somewhere between Russian Constructivist fantasias and Times Square circa 1998. Very loud. Very oddball. Very endearing. Encountering the Turku kiosk deep within MOMA—the museum that so recently reaffirmed its less-is-more orthodoxy by selecting Yoshio Taniguchi as the architect of its expansion—is a reminder that modern design was once, briefly, as daring and eclectic as modern art. Karrie Jacobs

Aalto's Turku kiosk (1929).



Photographs: top, Rebecca Cammisa; bottom, courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art.

PUBLISHING

911 Novelist

A paramedic barely survives literary success.

Joe Connelly, medicine man.

HAVING WORKED AS A paramedic for ten years, Joe Connelly is no stranger to stress. But in the few days since the auspicious debut of his semi-autobiographical novel, *Bringing Out the Dead,* he's barely caught his breath. No longer driving an ambulance on the night shift, he's now changing his three-month-old son's diapers, mapping out his second novel on index cards, launching a series of readings, and trying to make sense of his sudden success.

Despite the impressive first printing, now running into a second, and the enviable reviews, he says he didn't quite believe he'd succeeded until the day producer Scott Rudin optioned his story for $100,000. (Martin Scorsese signed on to direct.) Now, after years of "walking around with this writer head," he finds himself struggling to remain a regular guy. "I'm still a paramedic," he insists. Instead of embracing the life of the urban literati, he's considering abandoning the city altogether. "Too much vice in it for me," he says. "Too much trouble."

After dropping out of Colgate, Connelly eventually moved to New York, where, for lack of anything better, he started working on ambulances and taking writing classes. Coming home from a long shift and heading straight to the computer was an exhausting routine, but Connelly viewed his job as a kind of real-life fiction workshop. "Sitting in someone's apartment writing up the paperwork," he says, "I'd notice what was in their kitchen, the one suit in their closet, how they organized their lives along the dresser." As for the less contemplative moments, he says, "working in an ambulance in Times Square is one big lesson in irony. I'd get to a call and say, 'Now I've seen everything.' Pretty soon you stop saying that."

He rarely visits St. Clare's, the hospital where he worked and where his name is still on his mailbox. But at a recent reading at Rocky Sullivan's bar, twenty of his old co-workers—some of them working on medical novels of their own—circulated among the adoring editors and agents.

Afterward, they sat around reminiscing about the terrifying routine that gave Connelly his rich material. There was the summer night they pulled passengers from a subway car that was crushed like a can, and the time the stabbing victim died whispering to Connelly as he tried to hold her insides together. They know the temptation to see themselves as heroes; they, more than anyone else, appreciate the restraint with which Connelly brings these vivid stories to life. "There'll be a lot of medics who have such a different image of the job and their place in it," says a former partner. "But it's very rare you can think of your role so neatly and say, 'Oh, I just helped.' Joe knows it's complicated."

SARAH BERNARD

THE SCENE

Pinheads

Photographs by Patrick McMullan
Text by Vanessa Grigoriadis

"JESUS, I AM STINKING UP this joint!" yelled John McEnroe, grabbing his butt and honking as his bowling ball rolled into a gutter. In addition to whatever community standards he was violating, he was upsetting the very mellow vibe at the bowling party for the Coen brothers' new film, *The Big Lebowski*. "It's just cool that we're allowed to hang out on this planet, doing weird stuff like this," said Jeff Bridges, getting downright trippy. Frances McDormand, her feet a bit more firmly planted, marveled, "Don't you love that everyone has to wear the same shoes?" Proving the rule by exception, Lauren Bacall teetered by in black stilettos. "I guess they simply didn't have my size," she said, cradling a heavy fuchsia orb.

Will Smith, Jada Pinkett, and Tony Bennett at Sony's post-Grammy party.

Arnold Scaasi, Martha Stewart, Clive Davis, and Aretha Franklin celebrating the 40th Annual Grammy Awards at the Plaza.

Jeff Bridges and Julianne Moore at the premiere of *The Big Lebowski,* a benefit for the New York Academy of Art and the 52nd Street Project.

At Denise Rich's pre-Grammy party in honor of Kelsey Grammer's birthday, Billy Zane and Sekou Carradine.

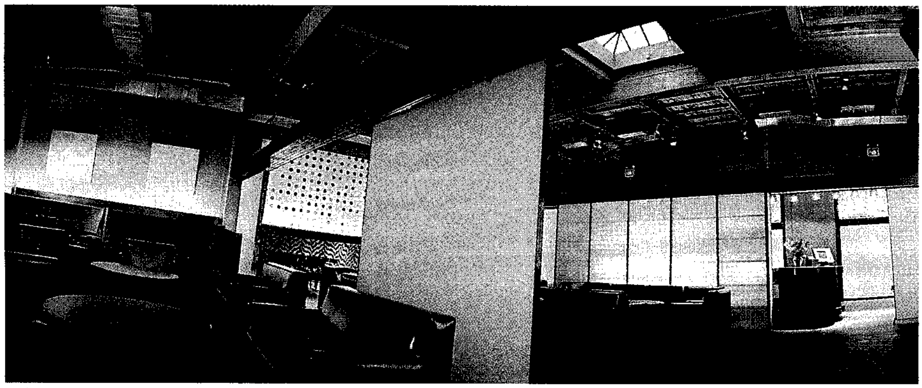
Claudia Cohen, Susan Hess, and Gale Hayman at a benefit for the Irvington Institute for Immunological Research, held at the Four Seasons restaurant.

At Moomba, Nigel Mogg, Stella McCartney, and James Gooding celebrating Chloé's new boutique at Bergdorf Goodman.

Photograph by Tom LeGoff.

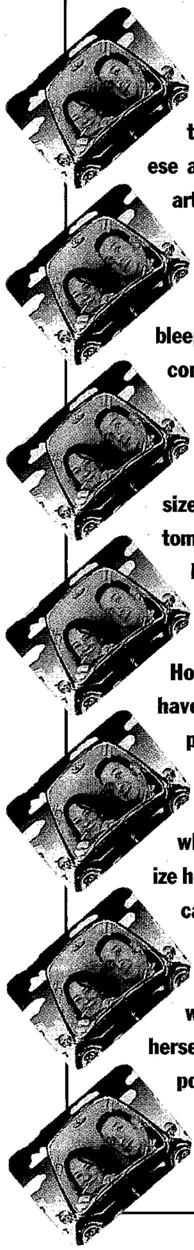
GOTHAMSTYLE

EDITED BY DANY LEVY



Supersize It

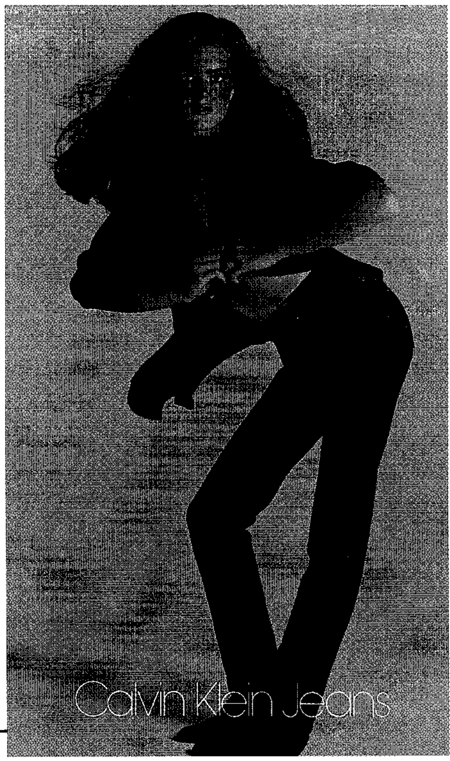
After several years of tiny, smoke-filled bistros and crowded boîtes, the latest trend in restaurant design is soaring, multistory spaces big enough to house a game of football. Lot 61, which opens this week, is an enormous 5,500 square feet, but even that seems small compared with some of the multiplex-size newcomers. Among the biggest: ● 27 Standard (opened January 1998; 10,500 square feet, 280 seats) ● Estiatorio Milos (opened July 1997; 9,500 square feet, 150 seats) ● Tuscan Square (opened September 1997; 12,000 square feet, 185 seats) ● Obeca li (opened December 1997; 15,000 square feet, 500 seats) ● Atlantic Grill (opened January 1998; 6,000 square feet, 235 seats) ● Tonic (opening in May 1998; 14,000 square feet, 450 seats).



Stuck on You

Guests at last season's SoHo debut by Amano, the epigrammatic Japanese artist, mostly ignored the artwork but stood in line for up to an hour and a half for a turn in the strange sticker-making machine bleeping and moaning in the corner. Now the photo-booth-like contraption—which, for $3, produces sixteen postage-stamp-size stickers with a customer's image on them—has been installed in downtown hipster shops such as Liquid Sky and Hotel Venus, where kids have been affixing them to pagers and skateboards. "These are so killer," says 16-year-old Krissy, who used them to personalize her beeper. "When I get my car, I'm going to put these all over the dash," says her spike-haired friend, who has pasted stickers of herself and "the nine most important people in my life" on her alarmingly long green nails.

VANESSA GRIGORIADIS



BODY TYPE

Better Red Than Dead

Last fall in New York, artists Anthony Gill and Cristina Bornstein concocted and exhibited nail polishes in the seven colors believed to activate the body's chakras. The installation was intended, they said, "as a cynical look at the cosmetic industry," but that didn't stop anyone from hooking the two up with a contract for Tony & Tina cosmetics, a line of nail polishes in spiritually significant shades. (Dark-blue Meditation is supposed to awaken artistic expression; red Ambition, to strengthen physical energy.) Other equally high-concept polishes now on the market include the 50 automobile-inspired shades of Paint Job Nail Color, from '94 BMW in Sterling Silver to '93 Mazda in Mariner Blue. Finally, for those not content making a purely visual statement, there's always Tuff Scent-ence's 40 scented polishes, including vanilla and cappuccino. Don't be scared off by the names: Gangreen smells only of melon.

KATE COYNE

Calvinism Revisited

Back in 1978, Calvin Klein's signature jeans—paired with a satin blouse and a feathered 'do—were the uniform of choice for high-end roller girls, high-school glamour queens, and people slipping past assorted velvet ropes. Now, two decades after a very young Brooke Shields brought them to billboards across America (and just in time for the resurrection of Studio 54), the ultimate designer denims are being reissued, complete with the signature omega-stitch back pocket. They go on sale at Bloomingdale's on March 15 for $52—about half what their well-worn predecessors are currently fetching in the city's better vintage shops.

Photographs: top, Warren Salowe; bottom, courtesy of Calvin Klein Inc./Richard Avedon.

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Musician

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Working without a net.

FAVORITE CHARITY
The Carl Stough Institute of
Breathing Coordination.

REASON FOR WORKING OUT
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have to run for your life.

FAVORITE WORKOUT
Swimming
StairMaster
Treadmill

VERA WANG
Fashion Designer

NEXT GOAL
Write a book about how I
see women today.

FAVORITE PURSUITS
Adoption Activist, Golfer,
Gold-Medal Shopper

REASON FOR WORKING OUT
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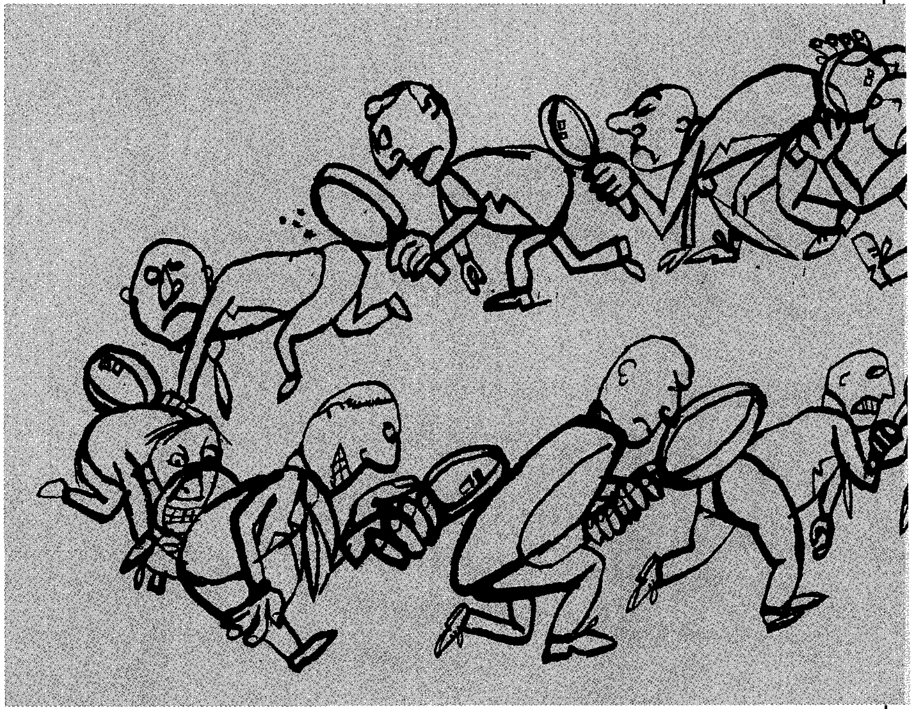
TIMOTHY WHITE

THE NATIONAL INTEREST HANNA ROSIN

D.C. Dirt: Can You Dig It?

We knew Clinton was a master politician, but Ken Starr's hardballing is showing just how dirty and mean the White House can be. Welcome to the War Room, Part II.



WASHINGTON HAS WARPED into the City of Sleuths. So many snoops, snitches, and freelance finks are digging up so much smut on so many people, it's a wonder they don't crash into one another walking backward, Inspector Clouseau–style. All the prying has made half the city indignant on President Clinton's behalf, the other half on Ken Starr's. Me, I can't decide which side is sleazier.

When the scandal first broke, we pundits tried to keep it dignified, tried to hew to the line that this was about the fate of our presidency, the rule of law that governs our great democracy, etc., etc. Now it's hard to remember what rule of law we were talking about. Instead, we've been drawn into what's looking like a primitive political campaign, with each side perversely energized by its newfound enemies. Starr, robbed of his dreams of Malibu sunsets at Pepperdine Law School, seems eager to do the job that George Bush and Bob Dole failed to do: defeat Bill Clinton.

If we're lucky, we'll learn one thing from this whole spectacle. Now, for the first time, the nation will get a glimpse into the absurdities of sexual-harassment law, of trying to monitor each wink and flirt in the workplace. It was Paula, remember, who led us to Monica and Kathleen Willey. Or, rather, it was the very permissive rule encouraging victims to dig up a "pattern and practice" of harassment that has shaped Paula's maddening lawsuit. Granted, not every victim has thousands of dollars of someone else's money to blow on private investigators, but this is the direction the law nudges them in.

When George Stephanopoulos mentioned the White House's new, "explosive" strategy a few weeks back, we all thought he was being histrionic. Modeled after a John F. Kennedy bimbo suppression, the strategy involved telling enemies to stay away from the president's bedroom or "we're going to open up everybody's closets." Saint George closed on an ominous note: "The president said he would never resign, and I think some around him are willing to take everybody down with him."

So now the closets are flying open. The stuff we used to find upsetting—namely, presidential attorney Robert Bennett's creating a dossier on Paula Jones's sexual habits and her old boyfriends—seems quaint, almost innocent. Feminists complained bitterly about Bennett's tactics and forced him to stop. But last week, when it was revealed that Bennett had merely slipped his files to another lawyer who continued the digging, the news barely made a ripple. Who even noticed when so much other sludge was flying?

Bennett was at least investigating someone directly involved in the case. Lately, the Clinton team has been mimicking Starr, moving farther and farther afield, digging up dirt on Starr and Starr's employees and friends of Starr's employees. (Which reminds you, once again, that the president and the prosecutor deserve each other.) At least four reporters told me someone affiliated with the White House (hint: someone who favors black turtlenecks) has been recycling the old saw, first insinuated by James Carville, that Ken Starr has a mistress, and that before long, we'd see plenty of hard evidence—"dates, times, hotel-room numbers, and photos." If there's any shred of truth to this pathetic smear job, Starr is more brilliant than we ever imagined—how in the world did he fit her in, what with the investigation, his law-school class, and his weekly stint as a Sunday-school teacher?

Alas, the photos never materialized. So the White House, or what papers call the White House "allies," burrowed deeper and went after Starr's deputies. Reporters received packets detailing the thuggish tactics of two of Starr's deputies, including a two-page "fact sheet" laying out a "history of prosecutorial excess." This, I suppose, was still within bounds. If prosecutors have a history of bullying, that's worth knowing. But then the shadow allies moved into no-man's-land and tried to peddle sleaze on the prosecutors' private lives. Several reporters heard the charge, as yet totally unsubstantiated, that another of Starr's

Illustration by Scott Menchin.

deputies had a sex-harassment charge lodged against him at a law school.

Like a puff adder provoked, Starr lashed out with venom. He issued a subpoena to White House aide Sidney Blumenthal, suspected of dishing some of the dirt on Starr's deputies. With this dimwitted maneuver, Starr managed to equal Matt Drudge's seemingly impossible feat: turning Sidney Blumenthal into a martyr. The former lefty journalist is Hillary Clinton's in-house conspiracist, the right-hand man who helps her map out the White House's paranoid world of enemies. It's something he enjoyed doing before he was even in the White House's employ. Remember that it was Blumenthal, when he was still working as a reporter, who encouraged the First Lady to investigate a Washington *Post* reporter digging into Whitewater.

Slapping a subpoena on Blumenthal is like putting hidden speakers in a schizophrenic's walls—it confirms all his worst suspicions. Indeed, Blumenthal lost no time in gloating over his good fortune. "Journalists certainly should be outraged," said his lawyer, Jo Marsh. This kind of thing "doesn't happen in America," she continued, adding that the subpoena recalled "the old Star Chamber"—clever, huh?—"or the Gestapo. Just outrageous."

It's tempting to see the Clintons as Stalinist in their dogged pursuit of enemies. They are, after all, a righteous bunch with no sense of their own transgressions. In the span of two days last week, for example, they lied about hiring a private investigator and then lied about their lying—brilliant management of the news cycle.

This type of snooping has been around for a while—private investigators are now a normal part of any legal or political operation. There isn't a local campaign for dogcatcher that doesn't keep an opposition-research firm on retainer. But usually, oppo research is pretty clandestine—the filthy secrets discreetly planted and leaked. But now it's been being played out on a grand stage, and the sludge is coming out in torrents. "People recognize this is a real industry, a real profession as opposed to past images," Terry Lenzner, the Clintons' favorite sleuth, has bragged. Who knows—maybe we've made progress: When Nixon did his digging, he used the CIA and the FBI. At least the Clintons foot the bill for their investigations.

In a generous mood, one could see Clinton's digging as a natural reaction to the corner Paula Jones's lawyers have put him in. Once Judge Susan Webber Wright denied Jones the right to introduce Monica evidence, the Jones team shifted its tactics to fit the vagaries of sexual-harassment law. Jones suddenly remembered that Clinton was trying to touch "my middle pelvic area," that he tried to physically block her from leaving the room. (Originally, she complained only that Clinton "put his hand on [her] leg" and "started sliding it toward the hem of [her] culottes.") All these new details add up to a much more wolfish Lothario, and legally, the difference is crucial.

Jones's lawyers seem to be trying to use new federal rules of evidence, adopted as part of the Violence Against Women Act, which took effect in 1994. The rules define sexual assault, distinct from harassment, as "contact, without consent, between any part of the defendant's body . . . and the genitals . . . of another person." This way, if the jury rejects Jones's thinly supported complaint that she suffered discrimination, they can still find that Clinton sexually assaulted her. "Defendant Clinton and his minions should not be permitted to cloak these asserted nefarious crimes in the mantle of 'Office of the President' in their desperate attempt to avoid personal . . . liability," reads the Jones lawyers' peurile brief.

Maybe Clinton deserves this. He did, after all, sign the law in proud solidarity with his feminist allies. Still, it's absurd. Clinton's game is garden-variety comeons. You can debate whether his one act of vulgarity with Paula Jones was egregious enough to count as harassment. But to conflate it with his mildly caddish behavior toward Monica, or Gennifer Flowers, is to make the whole concept of harassment look foolish. No one will ever believe that Clinton grabbed Monica by the hair and dragged her into his office.

Harassment, when it happens, doesn't leave much to the imagination. The case of Army sergeant major Gene McKinney, who was recently court-martialed for harassing several women under his command, is a perfect example. There, the prosecution didn't try to drag in every woman McKinney ever talked to. The women who testified against him all worked for him in the same office and were all treated in basically the same manner. If there's a legitimate way to show a "pattern and practice," the McKinney case is it.

Still, these days, why bother feeling generous toward Clinton? Let him suffer, so that others may learn. ■

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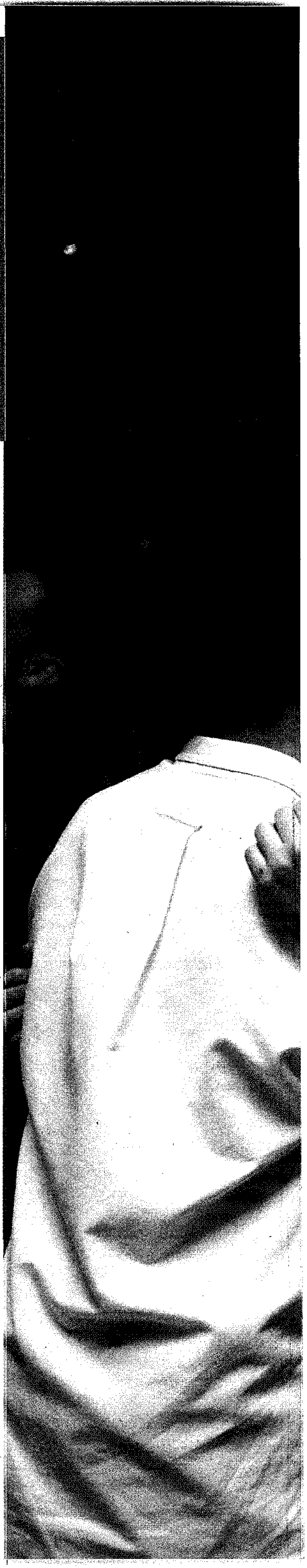
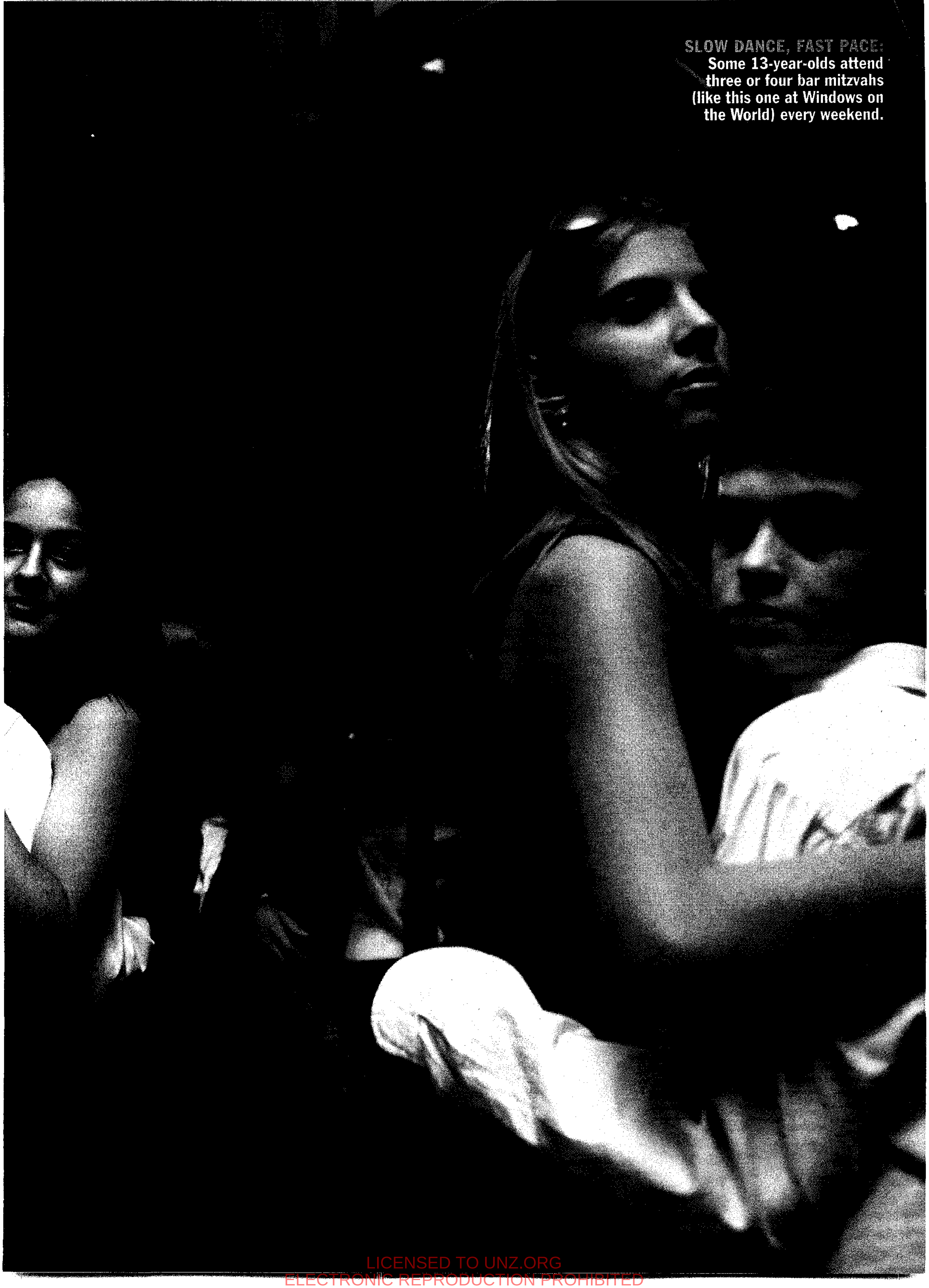


Never have so many 13-year-olds had so much to dress up for. Some say the low-key bar mitzvah is coming back—but not until the stock market crashes. Meanwhile, how does a quarter-million-dollar, multimedia, themed extravaganza sound? And will that be with or without the Grucci fireworks? BY RALPH GARDNER JR.

ONE DALTON SCHOOL MOTHER COUNTS HER BLESSINGS EVERY DAY THAT HER son survived seventh grade and made it into eighth. His problem wasn't his school's strenuous academic curriculum, or a learning disability, or an advanced case of head lice. It was bar mitzvahs. Not his—the boy isn't Jewish—but those of his classmates. From September through June of his 13th year, the average seventh-grader at Dalton gets invited to dozens of them, sometimes three or four in a single weekend, perhaps a hundred over the course of the school year, counting those of friends from Hebrew school and summer camp. • "My child was totally sleep-deprived," says the boy's mother. "It was a lost year, in many ways, academically." • It wouldn't be precisely accurate to call party planner Harriette Rose Katz, a tall, blonde woman of regal bearing, the queen of bar mitzvah planners, because bar mitzvahs are big business and lots of people have a piece of the action. But it's safe to say that if money is no object—as appears to be the case for many of her clients these days—Harriette will find ways to spend it that will leave your friends and relatives gasping at your good taste. (And probably holding a buttered roll and a cup of hot coffee: Harriette's latest brainstorm is a food truck serving al fresco breakfast at 1:30 in the morning as bar mitzvahs are letting out and people are waiting for their cars or cabs.) • Long gone are the days when baby-boomers, including members of my own family, had bar mitzvahs where, "you'd get invitations, a caterer, a band that the caterer had an in with, and that was it," says one father who had his at Leonard's of Great Neck. • These days,

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DANA LIXENBERG



SLOW DANCE, FAST PACE: Some 13-year-olds attend three or four bar mitzvahs (like this one at Windows on the World) every weekend.

many bar mitzvahs are grander than weddings—weddings often end in divorce, but bar mitzvahs last forever, as one prosperous party planner rhapsodizes—and they're held in theatrical splendor at places ranging from the Plaza, the Pierre, and the Rainbow Room to Tavern on the Green, Windows on the World, Ellis Island, various trendy discotheques, and, in one recent instance, Radio City Music Hall.

"It's reached a level of excess that's shocking," says a mother who would speak only from her office because she didn't want her daughter, who attends bar and bas mitzvahs every weekend, to know about her misgivings. Robert Levine, the senior rabbi at Rodeph Sholom synagogue, openly shared his own misgivings on the subject with his congregation: "While I certainly endorse a social aspect to this wonderful rite of passage, I do believe that some of these affairs have gotten out of hand," he wrote in the synagogue newsletter. "I often wonder what we are teaching our children when materialistic concerns seem to overwhelm the spiritual at the precise moment when we very much wish to teach otherwise."

Perhaps this is why there's a countertrend of families who are consciously rejecting the high-end parties—not because they can't afford them but on principle. They're forsaking the Waldorf for the Western Wall, traveling to Israel for their child's bar mitzvah with only immediate family members, or they're holding quiet synagogue luncheons followed by some form of community service, such as distributing food to the homeless.

IF THE PARTIES HAVE NOT QUITE SURpassed the overabundance of the eighties—when real-estate tycoon Gerald Guterman rented the *QE2* for his son Jason's bar mitzvah and Ivan Boesky dropped by in his helicopter on the way to jail—they're getting there. The $250,000 bar mitzvah for boys and bas mitzvah for girls (the girls' parties are often more lavish than the boys') isn't out of the ordinary. According to bar mitzvah planner Lee Tannen, "We get apologetic phone calls—'Hi, we're not like your other clients, we only have $50,000 to spend; we live in a rent-stabilized apartment on Central Park West.' "

These costly celebrations boast game rooms for the kids that rival carnival midways, emcees, Broadway dancers, the occasional drag queen, slickly produced video tributes to the birthday boy or girl, even Las Vegas headliners. Natalie Cole did a bar mitzvah on the aircraft carrier *Intrepid* in October. Her fee: $150,000 for 30 minutes.

Harriette Katz thinks of herself as a sort of Balanchine of the buffet table, a Picasso of passed hors d'oeuvre. Some clients don't see what they've bought until they get off the elevator with their guests. "I'm the voice of my client—even though they didn't realize this is what they wanted," says Harriette, the owner of Gourmet Advisory Services, as she stands in the middle of a throng of guests at Bridgewaters, a somewhat antiseptic restaurant at the South Street Seaport that Harriette has magically transformed into Wonderland for the bas mitzvah of Alexis Waxman ("Alexis in Wonderland"), whose family divides its time among homes in the Berkshires and Aspen and a spectacular art-laden loft in SoHo.

The evening reception featured the Hamptons String Quartet playing "Sunshine of Your Love," Peking duck that Chinese chefs sliced and folded into soft pancakes with hoisin sauce, a sushi bar (sushi is to baby-boomer-sponsored bar mitzvahs what chopped-liver molds were to their parents' generation), and, hovering smack in the middle of the room like the mother ship in *Independence Day*, a three-tiered "Tuscan Table," a concept Harriette claims she invented, that would surely have the good citizens of Florence scratching their heads in disbelief. The bowerlike structure spirals toward the ceiling: fried calamari, baked stuffed clams, and eggplant rollatine, buttressed by copious quantities of focaccia.

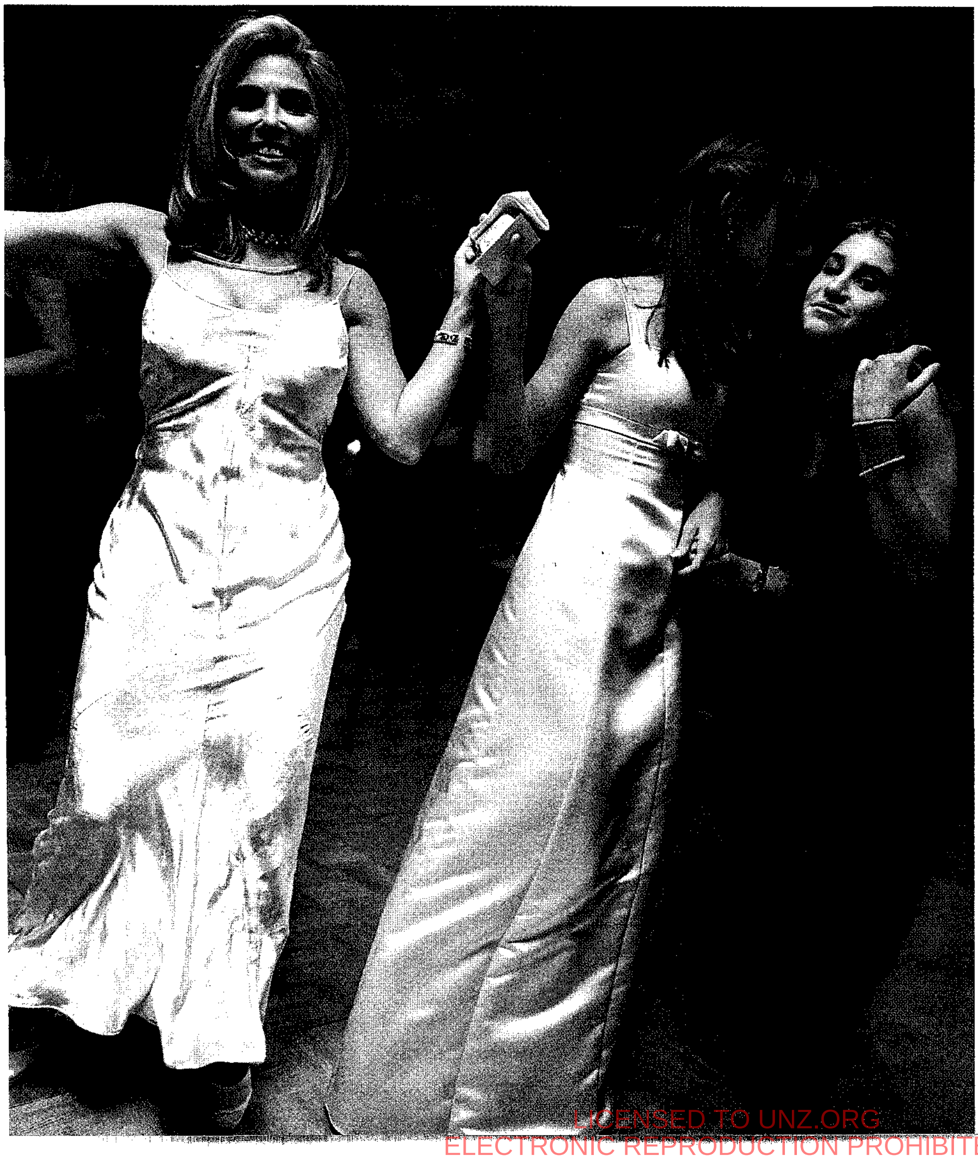
And those were just the canapés.

"We did a medieval bar mitzvah last May," Harriette says, leading the way through a black-lighted tunnel filled with streamers and blinking strobe lights toward the *pièce de résistance,* the dining room itself. There, life-size figures of the Queen of Hearts and the Mad Hatter, among others, gaze down upon exquisitely decorated tables featuring such touches as miniature porcelain bathtubs serving as olive boats.

"Medieval?" I inquire. It doesn't sound especially festive.

"Say 'Renaissance,' " Harriette replies. "It was my idea. I have to read the client. You have to know what her home is like and what her son is like."

Back in the cocktail area, we run into Alexis Waxman, the bas mitzvah girl,



NOT JUST FOR THIRTEENS: Today's bar and bas mitzvahs have previously unheard-of distractions for the kids; still, grown-ups manage to have fun.

"ALEXIS IN WONDERLAND": In Bridgewaters, actually. Bas mitzvah girl Alexis Waxman, left, and some of her guests.

who an hour earlier has delivered a moving speech at the synagogue about how a childhood fascination with Anne Frank sparked her own search for her Jewish identity but who now seems to be disoriented by all the glamour. Harriette shows Alexis the "sign in" board—a staple of bar and bas mitzvahs where friends can offer written congratulations—except that this one is six feet across, made of mirror and Plexiglas, and features a model of the New York City skyline.

("I didn't know what to say at that point," Alexis recalls later. "I was completely amazed. It was like a dream.")

As bas mitzvahs go these days, "Alexis in Wonderland" could be considered staid. Lee Tannen, whose Andrew Lloyd Webber–like efforts include "Mollywood," "Jesse on Broadway," and "Logan in the Sky With Diamonds," recently created a bas mitzvah entitled "Absolut Erin" at the Americas Society on Park Avenue. Erin, the bas mitzvah girl, hadn't developed a premature taste for martinis. She just loved the ads.

"The theme is the big thing," says Tannen. "And the theme has to be different from the other 85 that you've gone to."

DESPITE HARRIETTE KATZ'S AUTHORITY on all things culinary—one of her business cards identifies her as the "Conseiller Gastronomique des États-Unis"—she is but one cog in the elaborate bar mitzvah–making machinery. And as far as the bar mitzvah boy or bas mitzvah girl and their friends are concerned—kids who wouldn't recognize a caramelized onion pierogi with horseradish sauce if it hit them in the face—Katz is by no means the most indispensable cog.

That distinction goes to the folks who supply the laser-tag games, the wax hand-sculpture vats, the computer that morphs a boy's image with his girlfriend's to show you what their offspring would look like, the dog-tag-stamping equipment, the music-video studio, and the mobile photo-processing center that allows you to put a guest's picture on everything from mouse pads to a Rice Krispies box, his face replacing Crackle's, thus creating a bar mitzvah souvenir for the ages.

The galas seem fueled by—in no particular order—parental pride in a child's formal admittance into the Jewish faith after years of rigorous study, a surging stock market, the impulse to celebrate Jewish success in America, one-upmanship, and, perhaps most of all, the desire to create an unforgettable experience for jaded 13-year-olds who may have been to a bar mitzvah luncheon at Tavern on the Green that afternoon and a blowout at the Rainbow Room the night before.

Greg Telleri, a former Club MTV dancer considered perhaps the hottest emcee on the bar mitzvah circuit—"The emcee is king," Lee Tannen proclaims—received a cancellation recently because the bas mitzvah girl didn't feel her reception could compete with those of her friends.

"She knew I was doing [a friend's bas mitzvah] a month before hers where there were more games and a few more dancers," Telleri recalls, "and she was afraid that hers would not be as good."

Pity the children with the May and June birthdays. "At the beginning of the season, there's a lot of enthusiasm about going," says a mother who, like many others interviewed for this story, wouldn't speak on the record for fear of alienating fellow parents. "But as the season goes on, there's this frenzy to produce the unique experience."

"Toward the end of the season, kids have been to so many parties, it's harder to hold their attention spans for four or five hours," says Allen Dalton, whose company, Eventertainment, provides the fun and games for what he and his partner Tom Kaufman describe as some of the more "low-key" and tasteful bar mitzvahs in town.

"We try to structure a party so there are no real lulls," says Kaufman, though he hastens to add, "We almost always shut the games down during the candlelighting ceremony and the blessing of the bread." The candlelighting is a ritual in which honored guests are called up to light a candle on the bar mitzvah boy's or bas mitzvah girl's birthday cake. Harriette Katz, for example, was extremely moved when she was called up to light candles at bas mitzvahs two weekends in a row—at the Waxman affair and at another the previous Saturday evening at the Rainbow Room. "I became so involved with the child," she says. "It was totally the kid's idea."

"Weddings often end in divorce, but bar mitzvahs last forever."

"We almost always shut the games down during the candlelighting."

Ironically, in this overheated climate, it's the caterers who have come to think of themselves as the arbiters of good taste. "We try to say to people, 'You have enough, they're still 13 years old,' " Dalton says. "It's sort of our responsibility."

Ronnie Davis, of Washington Street Caterers, who has been catering bar mitzvahs since the sixties and is the primary caterer for events on Ellis Island, has even turned down clients whose taste he regards as questionable. "You cannot take a national monument and degrade it the way you would a hotel ballroom," he says. Davis prefers more decorous affairs, like a 1995 bar mitzvah he still fondly remembers. "Everything was done with a certain level of style and taste," Davis recalls. "We didn't do games. We dressed up some old-world tarot-card readers and had a genealogy computer there to look up the origin of names."

There were fireworks too: a six-minute display, orchestrated by the Gruccis, at a cost of approximately $20,000. "Twenty thousand is the minimum because of barge rentals and Coast Guard costs," explains Philip Butler, a Grucci producer.

AT SCHOOLS SUCH AS DALTON, Riverdale, Ramaz, and Horace Mann, there's a parent who volunteers for the important job of bar mitzvah registrar, a sort of air-traffic controller who makes certain that several kids don't schedule their receptions for the same day, creating an uncomfortable situation in which children must choose among competing bar mitzvahs, thereby turning them into popularity contests (which they often become anyway).

Franni Franken, wife of the comedian Al Franken and mother of a Dalton seventh-grader, explains how the system works: "Let's say you're at Park Avenue and I'm at Rodeph," she says, referring to two of the city's tonier synagogues. "If our children's bar mitzvahs are on the same day, you'd say, 'We'll be out [of the synagogue] at noon and we'll have lunch at Main Street' "—a popular restaurant for bar mitzvah receptions on the Upper West Side. "I'd say, 'Great, because I'm having an evening service at Park Avenue at six o'clock and a party following.' You have an opportunity for the kids to shower and change."

Personal grooming is an important element of the bar mitzvah experience, especially for the girls. The relentless parties virtually require parents to go out and purchase new wardrobes for their daughters. The standard is a half-dozen little black or navy dresses, the tighter the better, with matching shoes from either Kenneth Cole or Steve Madden.

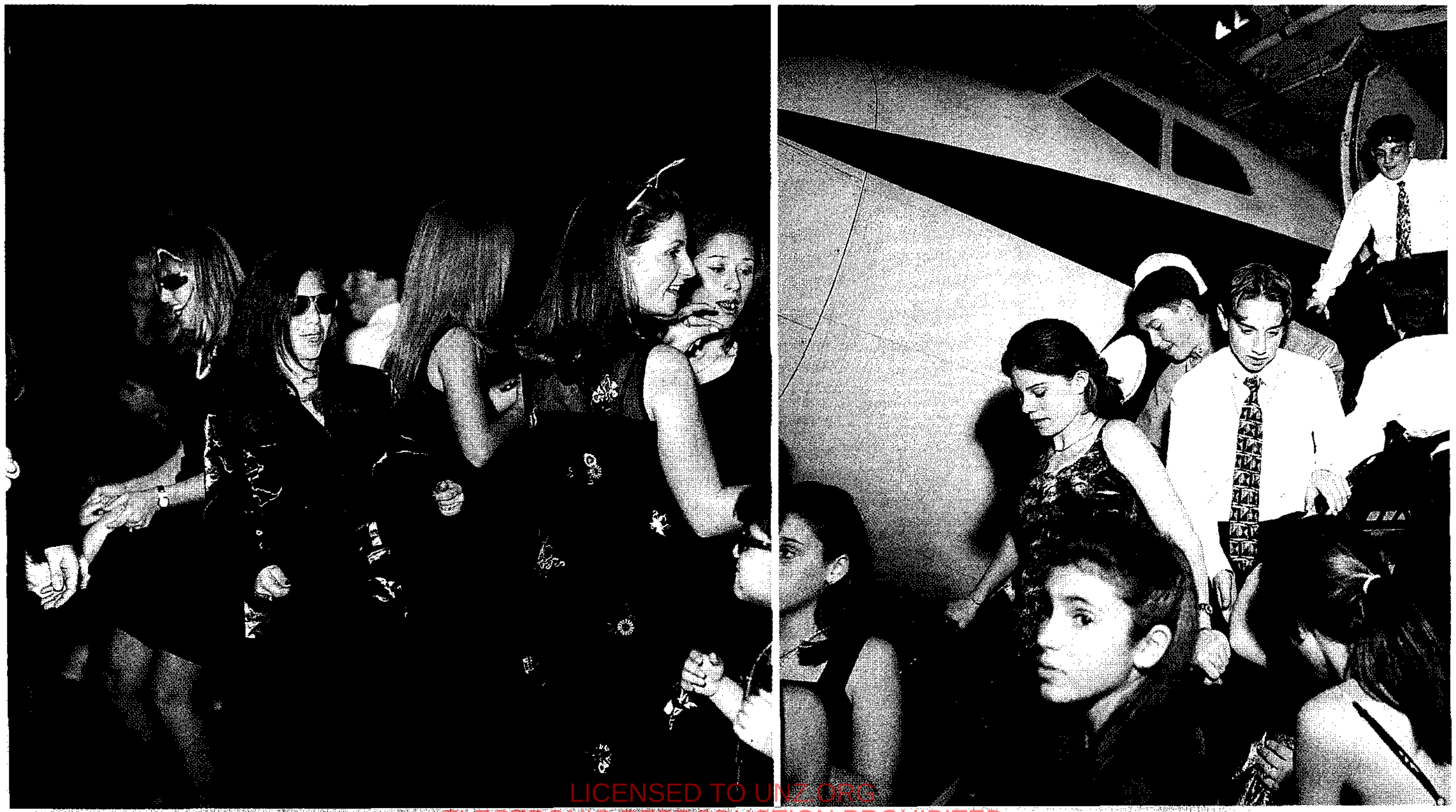
Some mothers double as fashion consultants. One requested that no carbonated beverages be served at her daughter's bas mitzvah "because it could make the girls look a little bloated in their dresses," says the catering manager at one party destination.

The mother of a sixth-grader, still in the embryonic stages of planning her daughter's bas mitzvah, was chagrined when her 12-year-old came home from school one afternoon and reported that a girl on the bus had announced that she was designing her own dress for her gala. The mom was encouraged when her daughter declared that extravagant and said she'd be willing to buy off the rack. But the poor woman was thrown into turmoil anew a few days later when another mother offered to introduce her to a couturier who could create dresses for both the mother and the daughter.

Some families, such as the Frankens, say they amortize the costs by having their kids swap clothes with classmates. They also carpool with other parents (though Franni Franken concedes she sometimes uses a car service), taking turns picking up one another's children when the bar mitzvahs get out, often not until one or two in the morning. "It's a school on the East Side," Franni Franken says cheerfully of Dalton. "But I'm having a very West Side experience."

Young ladies have also been known to leave afternoon bar mitzvahs early and en masse to get their hair and nails done for evening events. "Most boys think it's disgusting," a young gent weighs in. "All the boys are pro–au naturel. Most of us don't think they look that different. They look a little bit more 42nd Street."

In comparison, he says proudly, the



THE THEME'S THE THING: Below and opposite, an *Intrepid* bar mitzvah. "It has to be different from the other 85 you've gone to," says one planner.

boys "just make ourselves look a little bit nicer and slap a suit on."

SOME QUESTION WHETHER ALL THIS fabulousness comes a little early in life. "The problem is the kids get so jaded," says one mother. "It should happen when they're 17, not 12 or 13. They're not interested in dancing. They're interested in the pinball machines."

Another difficulty is getting antsy adolescents to sit through the actual synagogue service—since the patriarchs didn't have the foresight to incorporate interactive video games into the ceremony. The behavior of the kids from one school was so unfortunate that Rodeph Sholom's Rabbi Levine was asked to speak to its seventh grade.

"They'd come in, not interested in the service, and they were really boisterous," the rabbi says. "They'd pick up in packs of twenty and thirty and walk out. One kid said to me, 'Sometimes we go to three or four bar mitzvahs a weekend, and it's very hard to maintain respect for what goes on.' "

Even though some of the young ladies look almost ready to chair the Metropolitan Museum Costume Institute's annual gala—they're frequently a full head taller than the boys, and a number of them are already rather well developed—appearances can be deceiving. They still sound like children, their voices high and squeaky and their speech, not to mention their smiles, often impeded by a full set of braces.

And sometimes the games they play—not those at the reception but the ones on the long bus rides to and from bar mitzvahs at some of the families' weekend homes and country clubs in the Hamptons or Connecticut—help pass the time a little too fast.

"We all get bored, so we play Truth or Dare," confides one boy. "Most of the dares are, like, kissing."

"French kissing," says a female classmate. "I sit in front."

For all the time, effort, and money parents pour into the parties, the mark of the best ones, say the kids—though the bashes all pretty much blur together after a while—isn't the special effects or the free mouse pads but whether their friends are there and everybody's behaving. They seem to have developed their own unwritten code of bar mitzvah conduct.

"Even though if it's really extravagant it's better, it really doesn't matter, if everybody's into it, if everybody's doing what they were meant to do," says a seventh-grader, describing kids with attitude problems (lingering in the game room when they're wanted on the dance floor constitutes such a problem) as the primary deterrent to having a good time.

Says a girl at Horace Mann: "If at school someone is flirting too much with somebody [else's boyfriend], I won't look forward to the party because you'll think something"—meaning an argument—"is going to happen."

And at one reception, a bas mitzvah girl says, she "begged" some of her more amorous classmates "to take it outside." She perceives such behavior as a personal slight. "If it's a good friend, you pay attention to the party," she says.

MIND THE SPACE CAPSULE: Bar mitzvah boys are finding themselves in some unlikely settings. At another *Intrepid* fête, Natalie Cole entertained the troops for $150,000.

RABBI LEVINE THINKS BAR MITZVAHS ARE mellowing out. "I have sensed a reining in of some of the excesses," he remarks, sitting in his wood-paneled study off Central Park West on a recent afternoon. "I stand up in front of all family bar mitzvah classes and say to them, 'This is an opportunity for parents to stand up in front of children and teach them what's really important about this experience.' "

Many children now earmark a portion of their bar mitzvah gifts, up to 10 percent, for charity. One Rodeph Sholom bar mitzvah boy decided to give away all his money, asking his guests to contribute either to Project Ezra, which helps the Jewish elderly on the Lower East Side, or to the City Lights Youth Theatre rather than slipping his dad a check. That was an act of considerable self-denial, since children routinely get tens of thousands of dollars in gifts.

"I have everything I need," the boy stated simply.

"We have become affluent and in the process of this affluence have made our lives less meaningful," observes Misha Avramoff, the high-school coordinator at Park Avenue Synagogue and Project Ezra's co-director. "The incongruities are beginning now to seep in."

WHEN A SLIGHTLY GAWKY, BESPECTACLED 13-year-old girl stood a few weeks ago at Rodeph Sholom's bema, the platform where the service is conducted, and chanted her Torah portion in a voice that was strong and confident, if occasionally off-key, she did seem to be part of something larger—and not just her family, one of New York's richest and most socially prominent. And when she

“They tried to book the Rockettes, who had another engagement.”

used her speech to tell how Jacob’s cruel words to his son Reuben on Jacob’s deathbed—“You shall excel no longer”—had taught her how words can wound, one sensed that she’d actually given the matter a lot of thought.

The most memorable moment of Alexis Waxman’s bas mitzvah wasn’t the unveiling of the sign-in board at Bridgewaters. It came earlier that evening at Metropolitan Synagogue when, wearing a prayer shawl that had survived the death camps, she spoke of how her interest in Anne Frank had compelled her to visit Auschwitz with her mother while the rest of her family summered at Lake Como.

“I always wondered what Anne Frank felt like when she walked through the immensely large gate,” she told her guests, adding that the experience of following Frank’s footsteps across Europe to her final destination had forced her to ponder the question “What is a Jew?” A Jew, she concluded, the answer providing her solace through her parents’ divorce, “is able to find the courage to deal with pain.”

The solemnity and ritual of the bar mitzvahs themselves make the blowouts that may come afterward all the harder to understand. For example, the family of a girl who had her bas mitzvah at Park Avenue synagogue, who supplied the kiddush—the luncheon afterward—with centerpieces of canned matzoh balls and tuna for the homeless, threw their daughter a $150,000 black-tie reception at Tavern on the Green that same evening. It included a commissioned 60-foot-long mural depicting not the lives of the prophets but those of the Beatles, the bas mitzvah girl’s favorite band.

The escort cards were gimmicks, like chattering teeth on the “When I’m 64” table. Guests who were seated at the “Yellow Submarine” table, on the other hand, were greeted with a tank full of live fish as the centerpiece. The “Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds” table was literally suspended from the ceiling by strands of rhinestone-encrusted rope. The bas mitzvah girl sang Beatles songs a cappella to the honorees at her candlelighting, and the evening culminated with a fireworks display that exploded from the center of each table.

“I’m very detail-driven,” explains the girl’s mother, the CEO of a large company. “I spoke to [the planners] every day for four months. When it was over, it was like, ‘What am I going to do now?’ ”

She insisted that the splendor of the evening was simply a desire to celebrate life, not to impress her friends. “My mother is a Holocaust survivor,” she says. “Our celebration was the fact that she had survived and that we had a daughter to bas mitzvah. We made a donation for every guest who was there to the Holocaust Museum in Washington.”

Sometimes, the more observant the family, the more baroque the reception. It was an Orthodox family, for example, that rented Radio City Music Hall last November for the bar mitzvah of their son, who attended a Brooklyn yeshiva.

“It took a very long time to get them to commit to giving it to me,” said the boy’s father, referring to the powers that be at Radio City, who were more comfortable dealing with concert promoters than with a guy throwing his kid a birthday party. “I didn’t want a place where you’d been to twenty times over.”

When the guests pulled up, they could have been forgiven for thinking they’d mistakenly arrived on the night of the Grammy Awards. There was a red carpet, revolving klieg lights, and the words RECEPTION FOR LOUIS wrapped around Radio City’s landmark marquee. Tourists gathered behind the velvet ropes with their cameras poised.

The dad admits he tried to book the Rockettes, but they had a previous engagement. “The Christmas show,” he reports.

He sees no contradiction between his son’s Orthodox religious service that morning and the evening extravaganza said to have cost between a quarter- and a half-million dollars.

“If you’re able to have the means to make something different, I believe you should do it,” he says. “It’s a once-in-a-lifetime experience.”

HARRIETTE KATZ’S BIG DECEMBER bar mitzvah at the Garden City Hotel—“We call this the Long Island Pierre and Plaza,” says Joseph Borbély, the hotel’s director of catering—is actually a b’nai mitzvah (the plural of bar mitzvah) for a family’s son and daughter. Still, there’s a limit to how much one can economize, and each offspring has a separate game room tailored to gender. The boy’s lair boasts, among a half-dozen other diversions, a Wave Runner interactive video game where, standing on an actual jet ski and staring at a giant screen, one can fly through the Grand Canal in Venice, even taking a death-defying leap off a ramp near the Rialto.

The daughter’s lounge, on the other hand, has beauticians in white smocks helping the young ladies create their own “Heavenly Scents,” and a “Hot Rock” TV studio where little girls writhe suggestively to “Barbie Girl” by Aqua while a bored-looking technician tapes them for their souvenir music videos.

“You’re booked,” a female guest, swept away by the opulence and elegance, tells Harriette after accosting her by the wax-hand-sculpture table. “We’ll talk later, but you’re booked. I’m having a bar mitzvah in Miami in February.”

Inside the ballroom—a fantasia of silver lanterns wreathed in white roses and hanging from birch branches—the candlelighting ceremony is under way.

“You guys are great; whenever you come over, we get to stay up late,” the boy and girl recite as a couple of beloved relatives step forward and the band plays a flourish. Guests who may have trouble following the action through the flora and fauna—such as former EMI-Capitol Records chairman Charles Koppelman, seated in the back of the room—can watch on strategically placed video monitors.

The candlelighting is still going on without any sign of letup a half-hour later, as the kosher rack of lamb with a mélange of baby vegetables cools its heels in the kitchen.

“What number are they up to?” Harriette asks one of her assistants nervously. “This is the candlelighting that will not end.”

Finally, it does. The way you can tell is that the ballroom doors burst open and all the kids fly back to their respective game rooms.

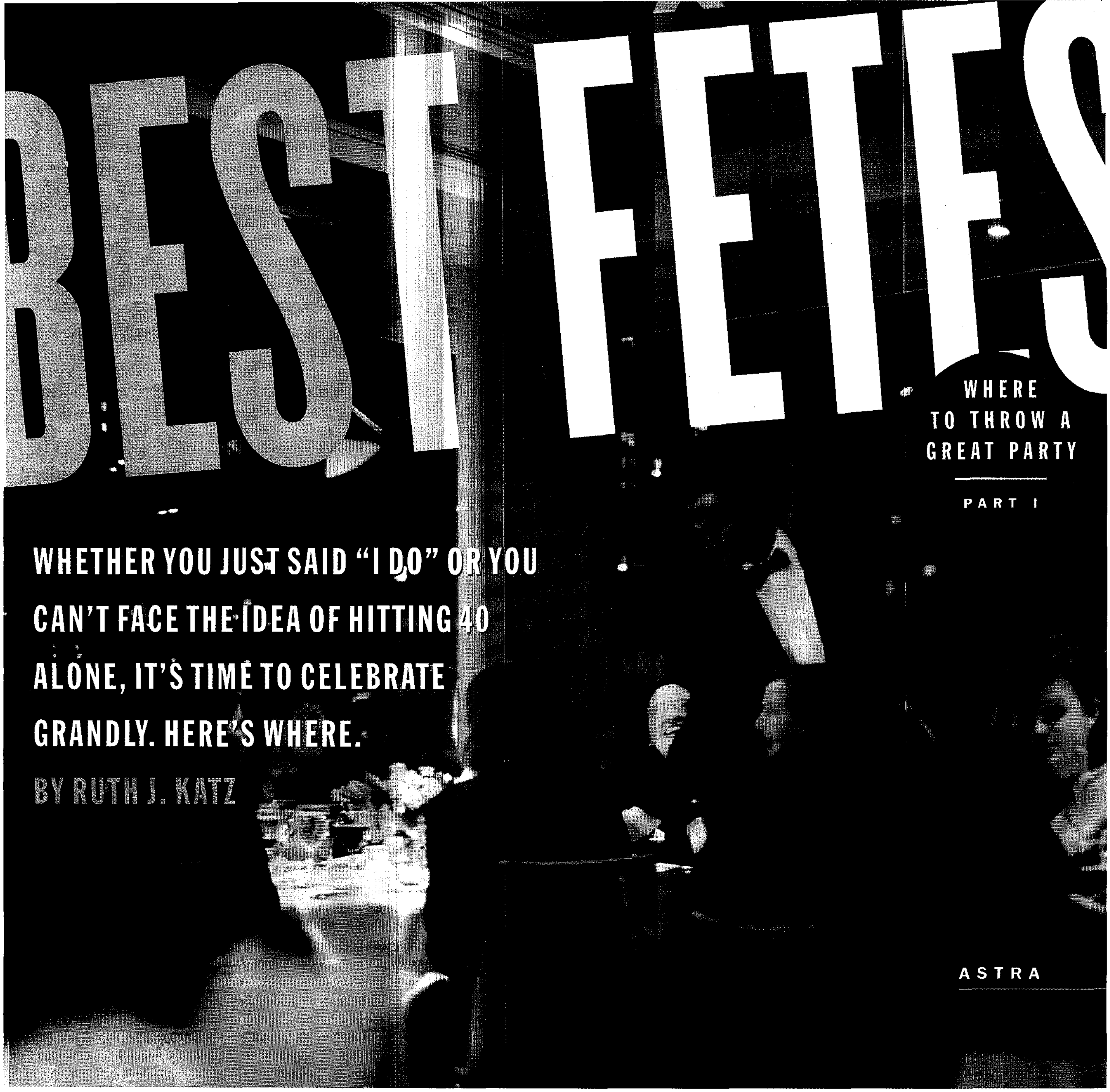
“Business is incredible because of the stock market,” says Diane Bienstock Setchen, a party planner who styles herself the “Queen of Tchotchkes” and who teams up with Harriette for killer bar mitzvahs like this one, which cost around $250,000. Diane supplied this party with the silver envelopes to hide the pink Sweet’n Low packets so that they wouldn’t clash with the décor; the $30-apiece invitations; the sunglasses with sequential blinking lights worn by the kids while dancing. “When the market crashes,” she says, “so will we.”

It isn’t even Diane’s most lavish affair. Last spring, she and her company, Fancy That, did a bar mitzvah for the nephew of Viacom chairman Sumner Redstone in Boston—a party rumored to have cost close to a million dollars. It included a casino, a custom-made dance floor painted with a giant *R*, monogrammed linens, and a birthday cake featuring a mythological (or perhaps not) Redstone City with a Redstone Bank and a Redstone Medical Center. *(continued on page 92)*

BEST FETES

WHERE TO THROW A GREAT PARTY

PART I



ASTRA

WHETHER YOU JUST SAID "I DO" OR YOU CAN'T FACE THE IDEA OF HITTING 40 ALONE, IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE GRANDLY. HERE'S WHERE.

BY RUTH J. KATZ

LET'S FACE IT: Money's back in style, and so is spending it, big-time. After a few years of stay-at-home doldrums, you no longer have to be embarrassed at throwing an outrageous 30th-birthday bash or an indulgent, soigné engagement shower. If I am to believe what party planners and restaurant managers profess, we're all socializing, luxuriating, partying with abandon. • But where to go to spend that money and still get value? Is there a restaurant where you can amuse your cohorts with unforgettable food and not

Photograph by Robert Wright.

have to max out your plastic? What's the right spot for the matchless fiftieth-anniversary gala for your folks? What about a place that can handle a small elegant wedding? We've begun the search for you by identifying dozens of places—large and small, well known and off the beaten path, open spaces that leave every catering and decorating decision in your hands, and hotel boîtes and ballrooms offering complete packages that leave you nothing to do but show up—all of them with first-class reputations. Unless we've indicated otherwise, they're available every day, though hours of operation vary widely. (Regardless of the choice you make, you'll want some ground rules before you make a deal; for a guide to what you can expect, see page 36.)

FOR THE BIG BLOWOUT

Most of these venues could comfortably accommodate all the extras from *Titanic* for anything from a glamorous affair to a bacchanal. And if you just want a spartan cavern—but with a view—for your blast, well, that's here, too.

Cipriani Wall Street

WHY: It's newly sprung from the clutches of Citibank, so everyone and his cousin hasn't been there yet, though the cognoscenti are clamoring to book this huge, dramatic hall with Romanesque columns and pilasters and a 92-foot-high rotunda ringed by Wedgwood plaques of the zodiac. Even before its official opening, and while it's still under construction, the site has served as backdrop to numerous events (including the annual fashionista extravaganza, the CFDA Awards, and Peter Jennings's wedding celebration last month). Built in 1842, the Greek Revival building once held the New York Custom House; it was here that Herman Melville penned some of *Moby-Dick* when he toiled as a Customs inspector. It's got Cipriani; it holds a horde; it's punctiliously restored, and it's administered with the precision of a SWAT team.

ADDRESS: 55 Wall Street. **CONTACT:** Shannon Ornstein (363-7914). **ACCOMMODATES:** 900 seated, with dance floor; 1,200 without dance floor; 3,000 for cocktails. **COST:** Starts at $250 per person for food and alcohol, including a cocktail hour. Tax and 20 percent gratuity added. **A LITTLE ABOUT THE FOOD:** You'll probably kick off your meal with Cipriani's signature Bellini and end it with another signature, the crème anglaise. In between, you'll savor the garden-medley risotto or baked angel's-hair tagliolini floating in an immorally rich béchamel sauce, with a crunchy breadcrumb coating. The veal chop has a delicate hint of rosemary; monkfish is smothered in a Livornese sauce. Desserts include a fine triple-chocolate cake. Service is European-style, with the wait staff parceling out portions from silver platters.

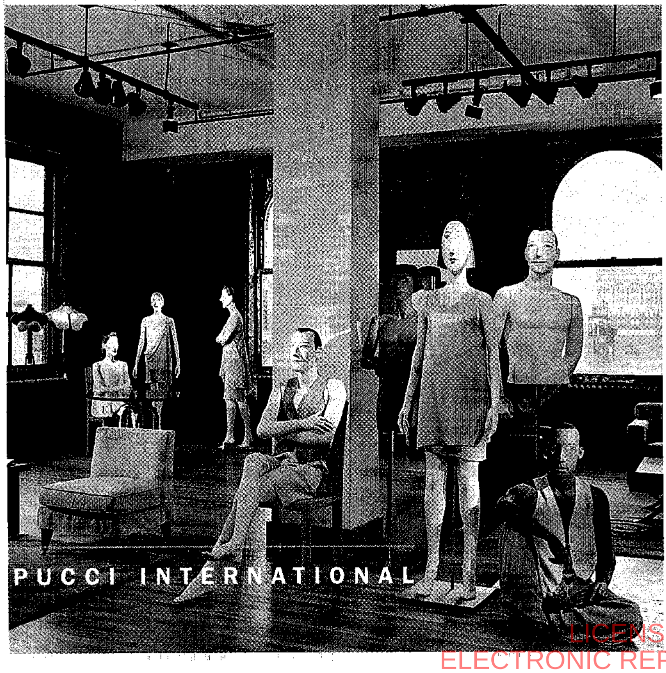
Astra

WHY: After turning down countless requests for private parties at his restaurant, Aureole chef-owner Charlie Palmer hunted for a place where he could truly cater to his customers' whims. He found it in Astra, on the fourteenth floor of the Design & Decoration Building. By day, it is the in-house canteen for fabric-toting designers and clients, but at night it seems transformed, a tranquil space with dark slate floors, maple-wood paneling, aluminum accents, a whisper of celadon on the walls, and picture-postcard views north and east. If the décor is unobtrusive, the food is more than memorable. Almost anything on Aureole's renowned menu can be prepared here by chef Dan Shannon, including an hors d'oeuvre of warm duck-confit crêpes with plum glaze, roast saddle of veal with chanterelle fricassee, and gratin of country potato in a Pinot Noir essence. Desserts are a tribute to both architecture and gastronomy. Another plus: Palmer and designer J. Paul Terrace have provided Astro with high-tech audiovisual equipment; there is no charge for using it.

ADDRESS: 979 Third Avenue, at 58th Street. **CONTACT:** Spero Plavoukos (644-9394). **ACCOMMODATES:** Main dining room, 150 seated; 350 for cocktails. Library and Living Room (adjoining), 10 to 20 each (seated). Terrace (warm weather only), 80 (seated). **COST:** Prices start at $50 per person for a two-hour cocktail party with an open, premium bar and six passed hors d'oeuvre; $145 per person for a three-course dinner, including wine with dinner. Tax added; gratuities are not mandatory. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Among the many winning courses: Succulent bay shrimp and red onions on skewers; tangy vegetarian nori rolls with jasmine rice; roasted-artichoke-and-portobello terrine with heirloom-tomato coulis and basil oil; tuna steak with balsamic glaze, crisp risotto cake, and baby bok choy; soy-and-ginger-basted duck with caramelized pear crisp, potato spring roll, and cipollini onions. Desserts include a bittersweet-chocolate-and-praline "opera" confection with caramelized-hazelnut nougat; for something a little lighter, try the toasted-almond galette with roasted Anjou pear.

Pucci International

WHY: Pucci supplies many of the country's toniest stores with dummies and also represents several Italian furnishing concerns. This showroom for both product groups is an 11,000-square-foot double loft, and it's at once sleekly Italian—immaculate polished wood floors, exposed brick walls—and, well, weird (all those mannequins artfully hanging around, some in paper outfits, some in the buff). There's lots of light (though the views aren't stellar), and the space is dotted with interesting



PUCCI INTERNATIONAL

ASTRA

CIPRIANI WALL STREET

seating groupings, so it feels snug despite the vast playing field.

ADDRESS: 44 West 18th Street. **CONTACT:** Leda Pucci (633-0452). **ACCOMMODATES:** 50 for cocktails only. **COST:** $7,500 per day. **MISCELLANEOUS:** You supply the caterer. Pucci prefers "industry-related" and corporate events, generally cocktails only; also, red wine is verboten—to protect the furniture.

Webster Hall

WHY: Built in 1886, this cavernous (40,000 square feet) site was called "the jewel of the Village" by Eugene O'Neill. The space has top-notch lighting, video, and acoustic systems. While the Sports Bar (three billiards tables, several TV monitors, and well over a dozen neon beer signs) looks like a brummagem Russian Tea Room (tinsel, glitter, garlands, beads, pearls, blinking mini-lights), it's actually wonderful for all kinds of merrymaking, sports-minded or otherwise.

ADDRESS: 125 East 11th Street. **CONTACT:** Martin Codd (353-1600). **ACCOMMODATES:** Among the hall's seven spaces, the most popular is the Grand Ballroom, normally rented with the balcony and two adjoining rooms (one a coffee bar). It can hold 800 seated (with dance floor); 1,800 for cocktails. The Marlin Ballroom, 300 seated (with dance floor); 700 for cocktails. The Sports Bar, 75 for cocktails. **COST:** $15,000 for the entire facility; $10,000 for the Grand Ballroom and adjoining suites; $2,500 for the Sports Bar. You supply the caterer, but Webster Hall can supply alcohol: $10 per person per hour (premium bar), plus tax and 15 percent gratuity.

Milk Studios

WHY: The new Industria, perhaps? You could shoot deer in this sun-blasted homestead of over 30,000 square feet on two adjoining floors. One wall of windows looks out on New Jersey, another on the Statue of Liberty. It's still a hard-hat area until April (though Calvin Klein has already had five fashion shows here). Tenants of the other floors are all the requisite types-for-hype, so Milk is generating massive buzz.

ADDRESS: The New Media and Arts Center, 450 West 15th Street, seventh and eighth floors. **CONTACT:** Mazdack Rassi (645-2797). **ACCOMMODATES:** 500 seated (with dance floor); 800 to 1,000 for cocktails. **COST:** From $7,000 to $10,000 for 24 hours; $500 per additional day for setup or breakdown. You supply the caterer.

J.E.T. 19

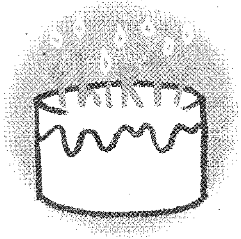
WHY: Holding a cocktail party here requires a certain degree of confidence and thinking big. The owners of Jet Lounge, Jet East, Groove Jet, and Jet Set in Boston have created a bi-level environment you might call Balinese chic, for seeing and being seen. You also get music blasted by celebrity D.J.'s like Mike D, Rob Santiago, and D.J. Sugar. The Jet-tini is the signature cocktail here: a chocolate martini containing more crème de cacao than vodka.

ADDRESS: 19 Cleveland Place, near the corner of Lafayette and Spring Streets. **CONTACT:** Melissa Lemer (625-9121). **ACCOMMODATES:** Up to 250 people for both floors; 100 for the bottom floor only. **COST:** $20 per person per hour for an open bar, plus tax and gratuity. Room fee ranges from $300 to $500, depending on night of week and length of party (no fee for parties of more than 100). Setting up a coat check costs $1 per coat, plus a $50 service fee.

New York Hilton and Towers East Penthouse

WHY: With its eight rooms, 7,500 square feet, spiral staircase, and private elevator, the penthouse suite at the Hilton is one of the two largest in Manhattan (the West penthouse is identical). There's an eclectic mix of Art Deco architecture and period furniture; equally impressive is the attention paid to even the smallest detail, such as an antique courting couch in one of the dressing rooms and a late-nineteenth-century palace clock in one of the living-room spaces.

ADDRESS: 1335 Sixth Avenue, at 53rd Street. **CONTACT:** Jodi Wender (261-5864). **ACCOMMODATES:** 80 seated; 200 for cocktails. **COST:** Room fee is $2,750, plus tax. Sit-down dinners range from $60 to $120 per person, plus alcohol, tax, and gratuity.



FOR A 30TH-BIRTHDAY PARTY

These offerings cut a broad swath through personal styles, prices, and food. And remember, they aren't just for 30-year-olds.

Firebird

WHY: For a formal, sophisticated space and marvelous food. The six rooms (including a new café) in this Theater District townhouse restaurant have been decorated in prerevolutionary Soviet splendor by the Baroness Irina von der Launitz, the Russian-born wife of owner J. William Holt. The two rooms downstairs are chockablock with precious china, porcelains, books, paintings, photographs, and antiques-shop froufrou. The China Room on the first floor reminds one of the secret china "library" rooms at the potteries in Stoke-on-Trent in England; the Blue Room upstairs is evocative of the Lapis Gallery in the Hermitage. I particularly loved the jewel-box parlor upstairs, draped in luxe fabrics and furnished with a delicious recamier, a spinneret, and two enveloping sofas so soft and downy, management will have to send a search party to find you if you sit in them.

ADDRESS: 365 West 46th Street. **CONTACT:** Wiley Nomura (586-0244). **ACCOMMODATES:** 20 to 200, depending on the room. **COST:** Starts at $46 per person for a three-course meal; cocktails, $35 per person for one hour, including two hot and two cold hors d'oeuvre selections. Hence, for $81 per person, you get an hour's cocktail reception and dinner, but that can easily soar with additions such as caviar and champagne. Alcohol is per consumption. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are added, to a cap of $250 per person all-inclusive. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Among the heady *zakuska* appetizers, wild-mushroom *zhulien* were particularly tasty, and the buckwheat blini were heavenly. Don't miss out on the *utka s fruktomi* (roasted breast of duck and crisp confit leg, with mushroom vereniki and garlicky greens, smothered in sour-cherry sauce). Finnish-born chef Ari Nieminen marinates lamb for two days, and it just dripped with flavor; the veal and beef pelmeni, smothered with enoki and portobello mushrooms, were served with a surprising treat—rutabaga balls. The house drink is "honey vodka" served in an elegant flute. Our waiter allowed that it has "cinnamon, honey, vodka, fresh vanilla, black pepper, lemon zest, fresh mint—and," he added sheepishly, "those are just the ingredients I know of."

Clementine

WHY: Chef-owner Jon Schenk's cooking is bold and intense; at $35 for three plentiful courses, this may be the most memorable blue-plate special in the universe. The spandex- and leather-clad crowd at the bar is turbocharged. The packed, open dining room has pale-yellow walls and an Art Deco–patterned, multicolored floor. I loved this place, even if it took an act of will to battle the percolat-

Photographs: above, Sarah Merians; opposite page, right, Antoine Bootz; left, Robert Wright. Illustrations by Carrie Leeb.

ing masses as I made my way from rest room to table in order to attack the baked hot fudge and the crispy baked apple that awaited me.

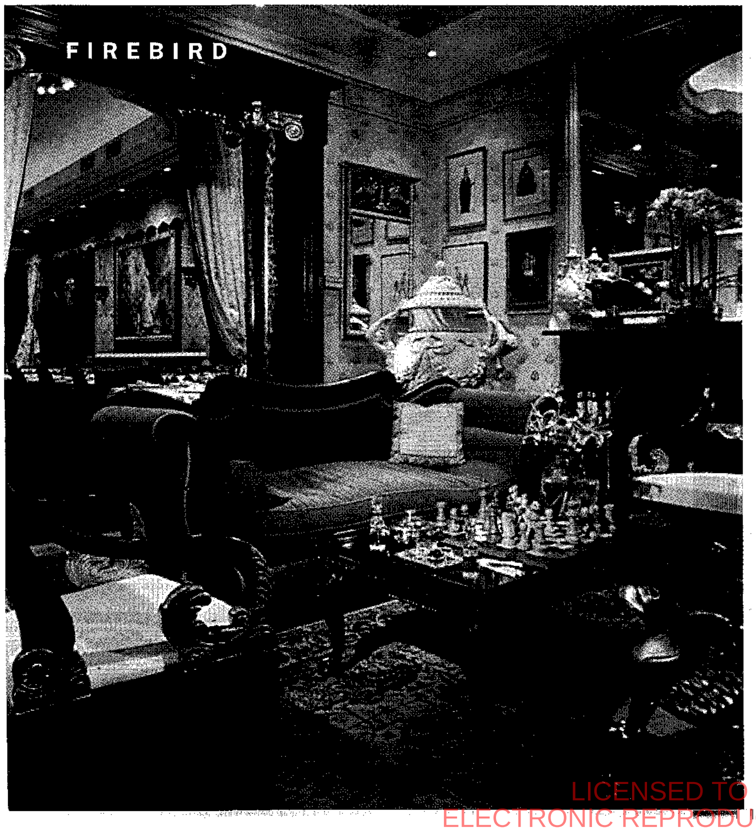
ADDRESS: 1 Fifth Avenue. **CONTACT:** Jels McCaulay (253-0003). **ACCOMMODATES:** Clementine doesn't have a separate party room—which you'd never want, anyhow, because the whole point is to be in the thick of it. Nevertheless, Schenck and partner Sue de Lara did include four tables in the front room that can accommodate 8 to 10, and three oversize tables in the back room for parties of 10, 12, or 16. **COST:** $35 for three courses. Alcohol is per consumption. Add tax and 20 percent gratuity. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Asparagus salad was accompanied by firm, almost crunchy beets, toasty leeks, and Roquefort. The roast Amish-chicken breast with broccoli rabe, shoestring potatoes, and spicy garlic glaze gives the rest of the chicken in the city a bad name. The wildly diverse notes in the chili-rubbed pork loin, plated with mustard greens, cheddar-coriander custard, and barbecued onions set my mind to thinking how good it would be cold, for lunch.

Restaurant 147

WHY: The restaurant of the moment, though I do believe this one will outlast the caprices of the smart set; the food is just that good. Co-owner Cliff Williams welcomes everyone into this ex-firehouse and seems to know all the guests, from the titans of industry to the titans of ecstasy, who make their way here. For private parties, the long, narrow wine room, with its warm-toned brick, claret-colored walls, and dark oak floor, has its own entrance and bar.

ADDRESS: 147 West 15th Street. **CONTACT:** Smadar Kelley or Darrell Elmore (929-5000). **ACCOMMODATES:** A maximum of 30. **COST:** From $65 per person (for a four-course meal) up to $90, depending on menu. Alcohol is per consumption, plus tax and 20 percent gratuity. (Depending on the size of the party, there may be a $500 room fee.) There are also menu plans that provide for cocktails, with an open bar and passed hors d'oeuvre for an hour, from $90 to $165 (for five courses, including big-ticket items like filet mignon, caviar, shrimp, and so on). **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Whatever your budget, expand it to include the signature 147 crab cake as an appetizer; frankly, it could have been my whole meal. It's a mountain of tender ivory backfin crab meat, worked into the shape of one of those giant, family-size cans of tuna. The seasoning is deceptively simple—dill and crème fraîche, capped with crunchy parsnip-chip curlicues and encircled by a sweet-pea coulis and caviar sauce. Roasted chicken, seasoned with hazelnuts, shallots, herbs, and butter, is served with mashed potatoes, glazed carrots, and pearl onions.

For dessert, I've found something that can supersede chicken soup as a catholicon: It's called black-bottom pecan torte, and it's not for diabetics. The pecans rise to the top, the coffee sinks to the bottom, and the sugar-shocking corn syrup just stays in the middle.



JUdson Grill

WHY: Ideal when you want to domesticate your friends (convincing them to forsake the weekend grunge look) and settle into a classy atmosphere without having to hock the Patek Phillipe. JUdson Grill is a businessy type of place; guys might be especially at home here because it has, as a friend points out, quadripolar floral arrangements that look like Don King's hair.

ADDRESS: 152 West 52nd Street. **CONTACT:** Cly Fowkes (582-5252). **ACCOMMODATES:** The entire upstairs back room, 56 seated; 70 for cocktails. The room can easily be divided in half to hold 24 (seated). Outside are two terraced balconies. All these spaces can be configured in diverse ways for cocktail and dinner parties; together they hold 90 seated or 120 for cocktails. **COST:** Lunch starts at $40 per person; dinner, $60 per person (both three courses). Alcohol is per consumption. Cocktails: $40 per person for three hours with five passed hors d'oeuvre and premium bar. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are added. **AVAILABILITY:** Monday through Saturday. **A LITTLE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Chef Bill Teleplan's appetizer of marinated yellowtail with spicy kohlrabi salad, radish slivers, mint, and baby greens is a double win: tasty and low-cal. The pancetta-and-Swiss-chard ravioli with roasted garlic and shaved Parmesan are a single win only: They're just plain good—too bad about the waistline. Roast venison with a black-pepper sauce, caramelized yellow onions, mashed rutabagas, and red-cabbage marmalade is compelling, while the pan-seared salmon with citrus vinaigrette, a drizzle of basil oil, caramelized endive, and sautéed spinach is a revelation. Dessert chef Julie O'Brien devotes an entire sidebar to the cacao bean and its permutations, all of them worth the indulgence.

Rain

WHY: The tantalizing flavors of the Thai-Vietnamese-Malaysian kitchen are the draw at this unconventional restaurant, as are the abundant family-style portions and reasonable tab. Rain is a good buy and a lot of fun, even if the back room (500 square feet, closed off with floor-to-ceiling, ruby-colored, moiré "fans") isn't much to write home about, especially compared with the inviting, rattan-furnished front room.

ADDRESS: 100 West 82nd Street. **CONTACT:** Missy Rosenthal (501-0776). **ACCOMMODATES:** 40 to 60 (seated). **COST:** For a party from about 6 to 8 P.M. (so the room can be turned again), it is $55 per person; for the entire evening, it's $100 per person. Either way, you get three courses, alcohol included (premium bar). Tax and 20 percent gratuity are added. **AVAILABILITY:** Sunday through Thursday evenings; weekday lunches. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** The price includes four different appetizers, four different main courses, and dessert. Cold vegetarian summer rolls are the best of the appetizers; the fried calamari have a slight dusting of coriander and are crispy and tender, and the Malaysian chicken satay, slathered with a thick, rich peanut sauce, is zesty. Sautéed chicken with cashews and vegetables, all served in a crunchy taro-root basket, is the top item on the menu. The grilled New York sirloin has an extremely hot chili dip, but it's marinated in such sweet juices that it needed no accompaniment. For dessert, ask for fried ice cream; a scoop of homemade coconut ice cream is coated in thick coconut flakes, deep-sixed in the freezer, and then flash-fried. It works.

Studio Ze

WHY: If this were an opera set, the stage direction would read *molto strano.* The owner, sculptor Sandra Sing, likes to characterize her loft as having a little bit of the past, the present, and the future in it; call it futuristic gothic. The extremely talented Sing made almost all the touch-me curved furniture and sculptures, many accented with bright tones (regal vermilion and purple) of plump velvet. As counterpoint to the brushed copper, bronze, steel, and brass on the lower level, there is a little Moroccan-style den up a cylindrical flight of stairs. This is a memorable space.

Photographs: this page, Peter Paige; opposite, top, Steven Freeman; bottom, Kenneth Chen (2).

ADDRESS: 598 Broadway, between Houston and Prince Streets. **CONTACT:** Sandra Sing (219-3304). **ACCOMMODATES:** 60 seated; 150 for cocktails. **COST:** From $1,500 (two hours of cocktails) to $3,500 (eight hours). You supply the caterer.

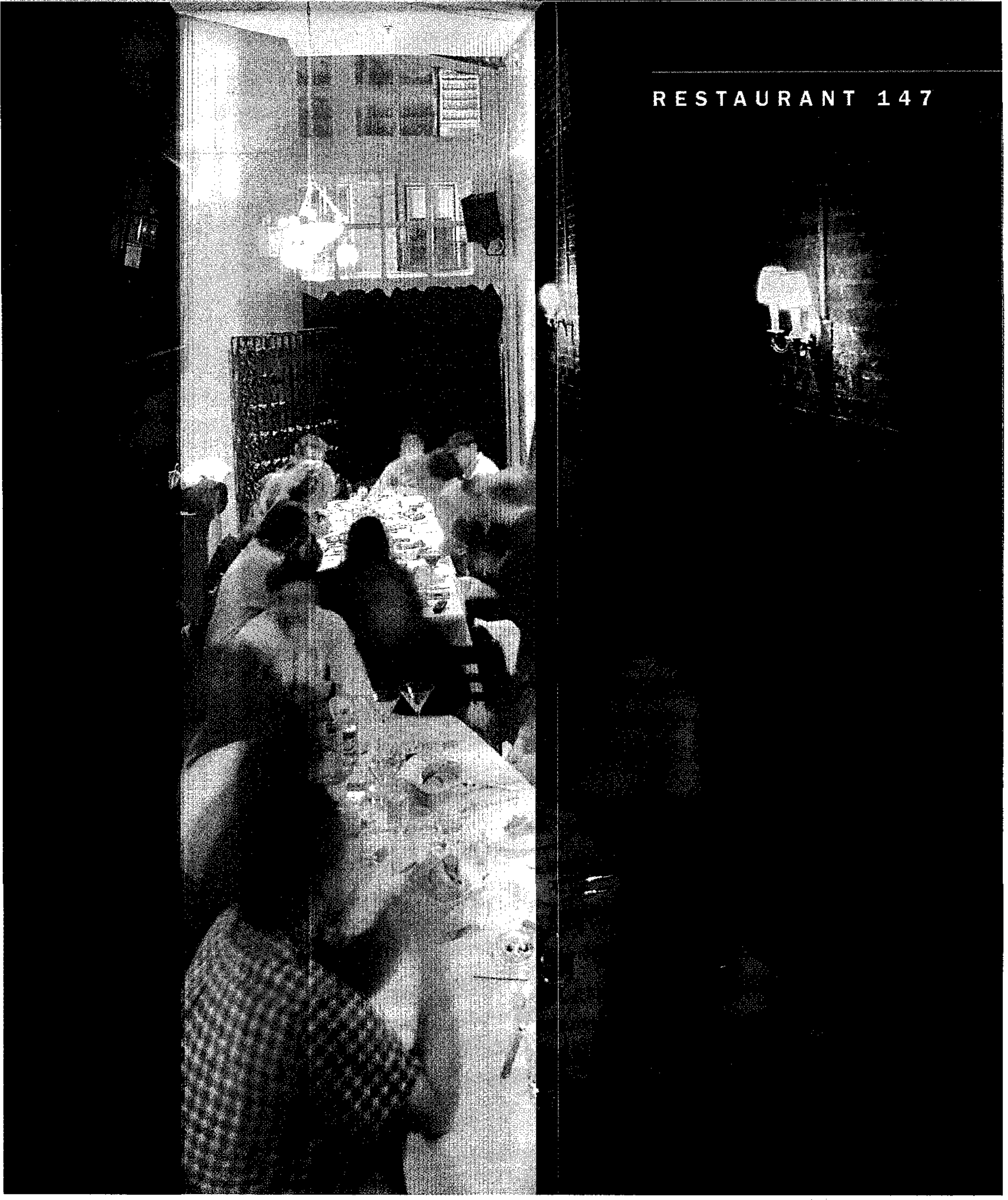
Carmine's Little Room

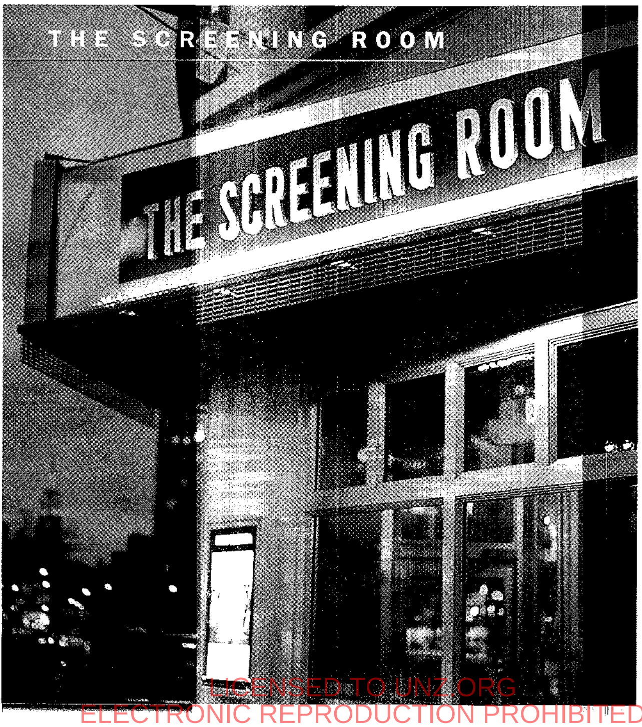
WHY: This is one place where the merriment will be guaranteed, the family-style portions are fit for teamsters, and the price is about what you probably want to spend. The main downside is that Carmine's puts a time limit on your party (it's what keeps the price low, so the restaurant can turn the room a few times a night). There's no dawdling over your meal, no ruminating over coffee and grappa.

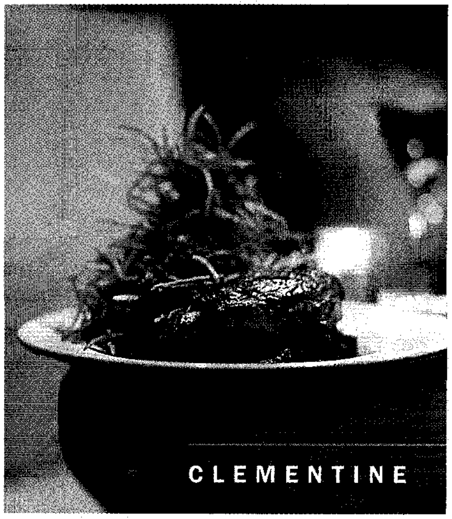
ADDRESS: 2450 Broadway, between 90th and 91st Streets. **CONTACT:** Corinne Escanes (362-2200). **ACCOMMODATES:** A minimum of 18; 35 is critical mass. **COST:** From $25 to $44 per person. The least dear is $25 per person for the food alone, with all beverages (both alcoholic and non-) per consumption; the same menu can be embellished, at $35 per person, with tap beer, wine, and soft drinks included. Two more-elaborate menus (with costlier items like shrimp and veal) are available, and they run $34 and $44. All plans include three courses; tax and 18 percent gratuity are added. **AVAILABILITY:** Time slots are Monday through Saturday, noon, 3, 6, and 9; Sunday, 2:30, 5:30, and 8:30. You have two and a half hours—and they mean it. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** No one's going home hungry from this barrelhouse. Stuffed mushrooms were loaded with tarragon and quite peppery, a worthy beginning. Eggplant Parmesan was made more like an eggplant lasagna, and was a labor of love from the kitchen. A signature dish, the rustic, country-style rigatoni was robust, laden with sausage, prosciutto, white beans, onions, and broccoli. I liked the solid pork-chop pizzaiola, moist and plump. The desserts flagged compared with the meal. Ditto the house wines served in this package; taste them before you opt for them.

The Screening Room

WHY: Be a director-mogul for an afternoon, and invite the crew over to


RESTAURANT 147


THE SCREENING ROOM


CLEMENTINE

your own private screening room. There are lots of possibilities here. Brunch, lunch, or dinner; several different areas to choose from, including a sixteen-seat i-room-theater (the *i* is for "interactive"), which is totally private and affordable. The i-room has two tiers of banquette-style seating, loaded with earth-tone pillows, flanked by narrow tables; every spot has a view of the screen. Chef Mark Spangenthal is a former sous-chef at both the Gotham Bar and Grill and Alison on Dominick; moreover, the youthful management is very willing to model a meal to fit your budget.

ADDRESS: 54 Varick Street. **CONTACT:** Peter Fleming (334-2100). **ACCOMMODATES:** The restaurant can handle private parties ranging from 10 to 300. The i-room holds 10 to 20 for a screening with no meal but only 16 with a meal; the space is too small for a buffet. **COST:** $35 for dinner (three courses); open bar is $14 per person per hour. For a cocktail party, the fee is $30 per person per hour with hors d'oeuvre; there is an additional $100-per-hour fee for the i-room. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT OPTIONS AND FOOD:** Among the possibilities: a weekend brunch for 10 or more, for $25 per person (the price covers brunch and the 2 P.M. screening of *Breakfast at Tiffany's*). Maccheroni here is a sophisticated pasta dish served with spinach, leeks, and tomato. Cedar-planked salmon with a paper-thin, crunchy crust and accompanied by crushed potatoes is equally sensational. Also on the party menu is a superb roasted chicken. Pastry chef Thomas Hobbs teases you with mouthwatering mini-desserts before you even see the dessert menu. We got a pineapple-lemon Tom Thumb–size icicle with green-apple sorbet, among others. The party-menu desserts are all wonderful, particularly the multi-flavored and -textured lemon-caramel icebox cake.

Anandamali Showroom

WHY: Artist Cheryl Hazan breaks plates for a living. She is a student of *picassiette,* which roughly means "plate-stealer," a technique that uses broken shards and fragments of ceramics to bedeck objects. This space is both her showroom and her studio; her work is kaleidoscopic, gleeful, and smile-provoking. The studio has three vignette areas, perfect for round tables for dinner; for a cocktail party, there's plenty of furniture to lean against or rest a drink on. And, of course, if anyone gets a little tipsy and breaks something, it's likely no one will ever discover it among the rest of the broken china. (*Anandamali* means "blissful garland" in Sanskrit, in case you're curious.)

ADDRESS: 35 North Moore Street. **CONTACT:** Cheryl Hazan (343-8964). **ACCOMMODATES:** 30 to 40 seated; 75 to 100 for cocktails. **COST:** $1,500 (plus $100 for a maintenance person). **AVAILABILITY:** Friday through Sunday.

The Penthouses at the Royalton and Morgans

WHY: For a strong dose of Ian Schrager–Philippe Starck glamour, the Royalton has an ultrachic penthouse with white modular furniture, a raised platform of gray stone, and glossy chrome accents. With catering by '44,' 75 or so of your nearest and dearest can graze on grilled salmon with crushed cucumber and dates, and sip martinis while taking in the skyline from the terrace. Or try the same pair's Morgans, and have catering by Asia de Cuba. The space is smaller but has two terraces, each with an unobstructed view of the Empire State Building.

ADDRESSES: 44 West 44th Street (Royalton) and 237 Madison Avenue, near 37th Street (Morgans). **CONTACTS:** Royalton, Allison Fox-Hollander (869-4400). Morgans, Debbie Riga (686-0300). **COST:** Royalton, around $3,000 (depending on season, day of the week, etc.), plus tax; Morgans, around $2,000 (depending on date). Room rental only. Sit-down-dinner menus from '44' start at $59 per person, without liquor, tax, or gratuity (30-person maximum for a seated dinner). Catering from Asia de Cuba runs from $55 per person on up for a buffet-dinner menu, and sit-down dinners start at $60 a head, excluding liquor, tax, and gratuity.

The Lowell Hotel Hollywood Suite

WHY: A shrine to thirties Tinseltown nostalgia, with vintage Hollywood memorabilia and a glamorous midnight-blue-and-gold design. Take a peek into Lana Turner's datebook, gaze at an original photograph of Hedy Lamarr, and arrange a private screening of one of the classic films in its library. (There's a 41-inch screen and surround-sound speakers.) When it's all over and everyone's gone, you and your co-host can lounge by the fireplace in a Frette bathrobe and order a room-service steak from the Post House.

ADDRESS: 28 East 63rd Street. **CONTACT:** Lynne Davis (838-1400). **ACCOMMODATES:** Up to 20 for a standing reception; up to 12 for a sit-down dinner. **COST:** $865 plus tax (room rental only).

FOR THE BOYS' NIGHT OUT

Whether it's a bank-closing celebration or a bachelor's last stand, dignified or raucous, the XY-chromosome crowd will find an ideal haunt among these places.

Patroon

WHY: Ken Aretsky wanted to create a swank, clubby place for the boardroom set. The décor of the four party rooms is understated, with neutral tones and textures set off by Oriental rugs, broken-in-but-still-plump leather armchairs, and dark wooden blinds. The wine cellar is the most intimate of them; the upstairs dining room, with its inviting, plush, cream-velvet banquettes, the most formal and capacious. The Airplane Room features a wall-size grainy black-and-white blow-up of mid-air, vintage P47 Thunderbolts and another wall sheathed in tailored brown haberdashery-look corduroy. Patroon is a modern (indeed, ready-for-the-millennium) American restaurant; many of the choices are preceded by words like *wood grilled, roasted,* and *spitfired.* Almost nothing disappoints. For example: The lobster-and-cod cake with braised parsnips was sweet and tempting; the wild-mushroom risotto had heaps of fleshy fungi, perfectly cooked.

ADDRESS: 160 East 46th Street. **CONTACT:** Andrea Gorman or Diane Skidmore (883-7373). **ACCOMMODATES:** Wine Cellar, 8 to 12 (seated); Airplane Room, 14 to 30 (seated); Upstairs Dining Room, 50 to 75 (seated); Cigar Lounge, 35 (seated). The entire second floor is ideal for cocktails and holds 150 to 250. There is also a Chef's Table (seats 8), adjacent to the kitchen. **COST:** Cocktail parties, $75 per person for two hours (includes premium bar and an assortment of passed hors d'oeuvre); $50 to $75 for lunch; $100 to $125 for dinner (each includes a

PATROON

three-course meal; alcohol is per consumption). There is a $250 room charge for fewer than 15 people, except at the Chef's Table. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are added. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Grilled salmon accompanied by state-of-the-heart leek hashed-browns is blissful; so is roasted loin of veal with chanterelles, braised romaine, and cannellini-bean purée. Apple tart with vanilla ice cream and caramel sauce provides a great endnote.

Union Pacific

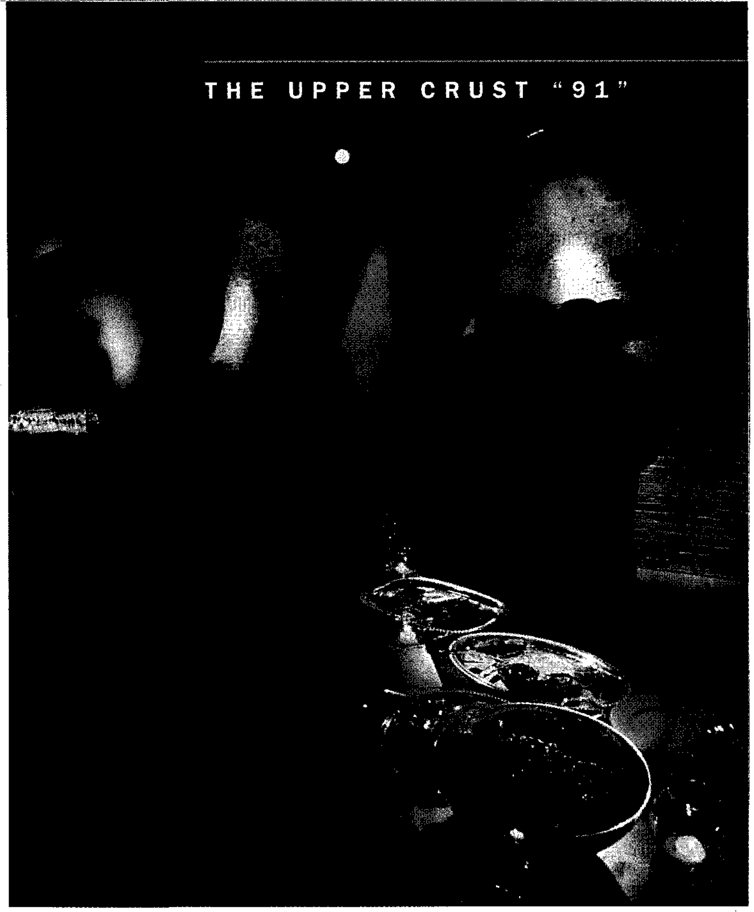
WHY: Here is a refuge of pan-Asian quietude and felicity. Your shoulders will relax the minute you hear the gentle *whoosh* of the mechanical waterfall in the entrance. The party room is soothing (camel and burgundy with gold flecks and smartly burnished cherry wood), the staff is tuned in, and the comestibles are memorable.

ADDRESS: 111 East 22nd Street. **CONTACT:** Cristina Hsiao (995-8570). **ACCOMMODATES:** 26 seated; 40 for cocktails. **COST:** Dinner, from $75 to $110 per person, including three courses; alcohol is per consumption. Cocktails: $40 per person per hour for premium bar with four passed hors d'oeuvre. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are added. **AVAILABILITY:** Monday through Saturday. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** The hors d'oeuvre of Maine shrimp, gently doused with pear chutney, is arrestingly sweet. Also try the cinnamon-and-pomegranate-glazed squab with long beans, sautéed with plantains. It is the short ribs, though, with the aged loin of beef and a massive shank (laced with delicious marrow), that remain in my frontal lobe. They're paired with a voluptuously airy truffled taro-root purée. Desserts are ingenious as well, and I'm glad that they're a little less Asian and a little more Hesperian. The chicory parfait with cocoa sorbet is a killer, as is the warm chocolate cake with confit of kumquat.

The Park

WHY: Owner John Scotto asked Robert Denning, of Denning and Fourcade, to redo this palatial space, once the site of Laurent, which reveled in a high level of luxe. The Park is even more sumptuous: Recumbent majas gaze down from the walls, and there is an extravagance of gilded mirrors, plush carpeting aswirl with leaves and roses, and ormolu everywhere. For parties, the more subdued Tamboril Lounge—with its checkerboard marble floor, bold yellow-ocher walls, and generously upholstered furniture—is a crowd-pleasing room. In the robin's-egg-colored Garden Room—a sliver of real estate behind the bar—the fabric-swagged skylight and two windows lend the space an airy charm.

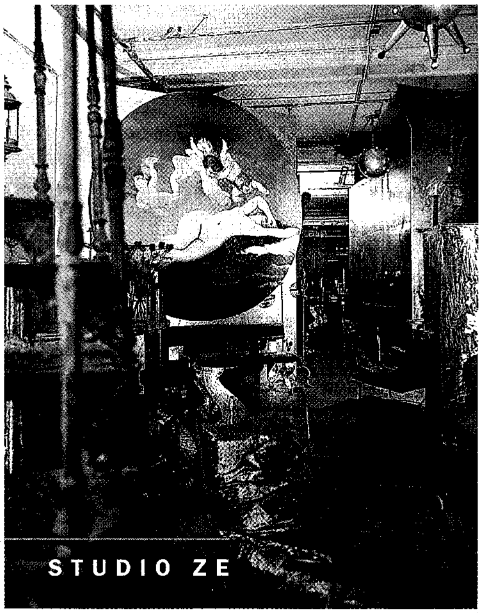
ADDRESS: The Lombardy Hotel, 109 East 56th Street. **CONTACT:** Joey Olshefski (750-5656). **ACCOMMODATES:** The formal dining room, 250 seated; 600 for cocktails, if the adjoining bar is also used. The Denning Room, 30 seated (the room doesn't lend itself to a cocktail party). The Garden Room, 32 seated. The Tamboril Lounge, 14 (seated), ideally, if you want to maintain the look of a living room, but as many as 50 for dinner or 80 for cocktails. The lower-level Petit Salon, 85 seated; 150 for cocktails. The adjoining Grand Ballroom, 135 seated; 200 for cocktails. **COST:** From $20 per person for the first hour of a cocktail party, then $15 per person for each of the second and third hours (includes a premium bar and five passed hors d'oeuvre); $100 for dinner for three courses, including an open bar for the first hour and five passed hors d'oeuvre; after the first hour, alcohol is per consumption. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are added. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** The cuisine is updated French (consommé, for example, is served with watercress dumplings and pea shoots). Fabrizzio Salerni was formerly the chef de cuisine under Gray Kunz at Lespinasse and has clearly earned the right to rule his own domain. Crabmeat salad in tomato-bourbon dressing with avocado relish is a harmonious concoction and particularly refreshing as a starter. Buttery fillet of sole is accompanied by, among other things, an unexpected garnish of a single pea pod, steamed, split, and artfully arranged; parsley-crusted rack of lamb with eggplant and chickpeas is tender and tantalizing. The desserts include a warm apple tart with bourbon-almond ice cream in a pool of caramel sauce; the chocolate noisette (a creamy hazelnut-chocolate mousse with vanilla ice cream in a chocolate lace) is unexpectedly dense and toothsome.



The Upper Crust "91"

WHY: It's a stone's throw from Wall Street, housed in a sober, no-nonsense environment, and owner Dan Fehlig really knows how to cater to corporate types. It's a spare environment—shiny wooden floors, exposed-brick walls, and an intricate lighting and drapery system that can be used to change the feel of the room—so that the space would transform nicely for many different events.

ADDRESS: 91 Horatio Street. **CONTACT:** Joe St. Cyr (691-4570). **ACCOMMODATES:** 80 seated; 150 for cocktails. **COST:** There is a $1,500 minimum for food, even if you schedule a private dinner for five. In general, for larger parties: From $110 to $175 per person including cocktail hour (premium bar and hors d'oeuvre) and three courses; dinner wines excluded; food minimum still applies. Tax is added; gratuity is optional. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Chef Bernadette Cura's dishes are very sophisticated: Hors d'oeuvre might include a delicate mango-crab napoleon, a light, spicy salad layered between tortilla leaves. Among the appetizers: delicate smoked-shrimp-and-scallion crêpes with roasted-pepper coulis and wilted napa cabbage; a pungent and complex tomato-and-caramelized-onion tart with niçoise olives, fresh goat cheese, thyme, and balsamic glaze. Main courses range from traditional tournedos with a kicky



Photographs: this page, top, Joseph E. Lipinski; bottom, Diane Kosup; opposite, Kenneth Chen.

tomato-cumin sauce, horseradish-potato gratin, and haricots verts, to tender roasted quail with caramelized apples. The many tempting desserts include chocolate bread pudding with cherries, cranberry coulis, and rum-laced double cream—yes, that's one dish, and pretty dangerous indeed.

The Stanhope Blue Bongo Bar and Gerard Room

WHY: With its Art Deco murals, vintage concert posters, and sapphire-velvet retro luxury, the Blue Bongo Bar at the Stanhope is a tribute to the Jazz Age. Attached is Nica's, a restaurant co-owned by André Balazs that serves up Provençal cuisine. Try the eponymous martini, made with gin and blue curaçao. Feed a stack of quarters into the jazz-only jukebox and let John Coltrane, Sonny Rollins, and Miles Davis transport your party to the Left Bank. The Gerard Room is perfect for an evening of cigar smoking, cards, and cognac with friends in a mahogany-paneled retreat with old jade-hued Chesterfield couches and Oriental carpets.

ADDRESS: 995 Fifth Avenue. **CONTACT:** Stephan Meier (717-0303). **ACCOMMODATES:** To take over the Blue Bongo Bar requires a minimum of 35 and a maximum of 60. Gerard Room, up to 30 seated; 50 for cocktails. **COST:** Blue Bongo Bar, $45 per person per hour for a premium open bar, plus tax and gratuity; for hors d'oeuvre, add $65 per person, plus tax and gratuity. Gerard Room, room fee negotiable; a two-hour cocktail reception with a selection of six passed hors d'oeuvre from Nica's runs about $60 per person and up, plus tax and gratuity.

13

WHY: Because it has a real disco ball, a cabaret license, and a history besides (back in the late eighties, it was the hipster hideaway Peggy Sue's). Special theme parties most nights of the week (poetry, art installations, and house music).

ADDRESS: 35 East 13th Street. **CONTACT:** Thomas Sullivan (979-6677). **ACCOMMODATES:** 50 to 200 people. **COST:** $12.50 per person per hour for an open bar, plus tax and gratuity. Or $15 an hour for full premium bar. Generally no room fee, but ask.

Please join us!

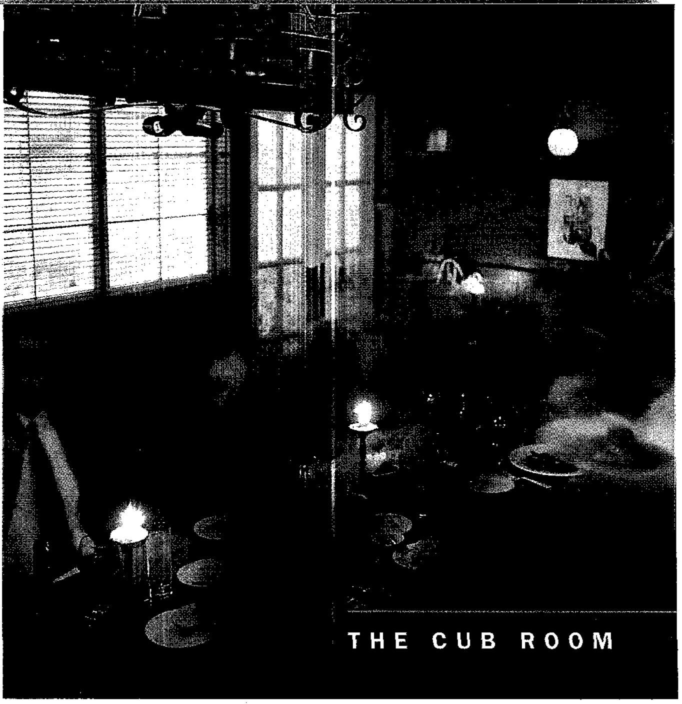
FOR AN INTIMATE AFFAIR

Besides the restaurants listed here, several others are noteworthy, including Le Cirque 2000 and Park Avenue Cafe—both with chef's tables in the kitchen—and Union Pacific, for its Tatami Room.

The Cub Room

WHY: For a serendipitous blend of inspired haute cuisine and casual neighborhood simplicity, the Cub Room (named for the private retreat in the Stork Club where the swells used to gather in *All About Eve*) gets my vote. The tone is set with the wooden billboard-style sign outside that humbly proclaims ORGANIC FOOD in carnival colors. "Fresh, fresh, fresh," chef-owner Henry Meer tells me. "A lot of passion went into putting this place together." His ardor has paid off. You and your friends will have a damn fine meal at his chef's table (which, as it happens, is an old baker's board) in a windowed room looking into the kitchen.

ADDRESS: 131 Sullivan Street or 183 Prince Street. **CONTACT:** Gary Koenigsberg or Veronica Marino (677-4100). **ACCOMMODATES:** 10 to 16 (the Café is also available for rental; it seats 50). **COST:** $65 to $75 for four or five courses; alcohol is per consumption. Tax and 18 percent gratuity are added. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Meer will work with you to develop a menu that might include crisp-crusted Tuscan pizza with robiolo, ricotta, and mozzarella and a dulcet note of white-truffle oil; snapper rolls with a wrap of shiitake mushrooms, organic baby greens, cilantro, and macadamia nuts are a smashing mélange. Wild-mushroom risotto is very light, not bogged down with filler. Tempting main courses include medallions of veal pan roasted in an onion confit with mustard seed and port wine, and the


THE CUB ROOM

THE PARK'S GARDEN ROOM

Photographs: this page, top, Kenneth Chen; bottom, Malinda Kramer; opposite, Steven Freeman(2).

signature Cub steak, which is also pan roasted, in a reduction of shallots, cognac, madeira, raisins, and veal stock. The not-to-be-overlooked codetta: the melting Valrhona-chocolate cake with pistachio ice cream.

Les Célébrités

WHY: Les Célébrités is the luxe restaurant at the Essex House. When the room opened in 1991, the general manager of the hotel was married to actress Elke Sommer, and somehow Sommer's artwork and that of other boldface types came to deck the walls—hence the room's appellation. But the real artistry here is on the plates, not the walls. The main salon is formal and regal (table service by Limoges, Christofle, and Baccarat) yet still welcoming. It is, therefore, a little surprising—but I think refreshing—that the imperial oval table in the adjoining private dining room isn't usually covered with a cloth for a private party; instead, the patina of the lustrous ribbon mahogany is allowed to sparkle between the casual place mats. The room is cozy, with leopard-print carpet, deep-garnet walls, and dim sconces; it feels as if you are in someone's private dining room—and indeed you are.

ADDRESS: Essex House, 160 Central Park South. **CONTACT:** Pierre Tagournet (484-5113). **ACCOMMODATES:** Up to 12 (seated). **COST:** Starting prices: $125 for the food alone (hors d'oeuvre and three courses); for 12, the bottom line is usually between $2,500 and $3,000, including everything. **AVAILABILITY:** Tuesday through Saturday. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Christian Delouvrier's cooking is classic French—rich, seductive, and satisfying. The pyramid of tuna is a paean to the raw and the cooked: It's a construct of tuna tartare and grilled tuna, baby lettuce with fresh mint and balsamic vinaigrette, in all a grand tease to begin with. Follow that with the squash soup "Carnival" with duck magret and foie gras. I especially liked sautéed and roasted bay prawns with gratin of artichoke hearts, Parmesan cheese, olive oil, and black truffles. The pit-roasted pheasant from Scotland in a millefeuille of Savoy cabbage with natural juices was a delicacy, but even better was rack of lamb with a crust of mustard, cumin, and coriander, served with a saddle Provençal and chickpea fries. Another superb offering is the roasted Maine lobster with vanilla bean, lemon pasta, julienne of black trumpet mushrooms, fava beans, and confit of orange peel. Not to downplay the great chocolate soufflé with praline ice cream, my dessert was a showstopper: an alabaster-white cocoon of gauzy spun sugar that was cosseted on a silver pedestal, its snowy dome flecked with raspberries and encircled by a dozen hand-fashioned *mignardises*.

Picholine

WHY: Picholine's Lilliputian wine room is a sheltering asylum that might be a little *too* intimate for some. It's a fairly bare-boned spot: walls lined with wooden shelves and wine bottles, a tile floor, a small round table, and custom-made cane-backed chairs (the restaurant's famed cheese cave is just off this room). The entire staff is exceptionally knowledgeable and most eager-to-please.

ADDRESS: 35 West 64th Street. **CONTACT:** David Merves (724-8585). **ACCOMMODATES:** 4 to 8 people (N.B. There is also a new private room—handsomely furnished in the reserved Provençal style of the main room—that seats 30). **COST:** From $47 per person for two courses and $55 for three; there is a second seating in the wine room at 8 P.M. that costs $65. The chef's tasting menu, which includes four or five courses, starts at $75 and goes to $100. In the larger party room, prices start at $45 for lunch, $75 for dinner. Alcohol is per consumption. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are added. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Begin with the snap, crackle, and pop of the twiglike herbed breadsticks and end with the warm chocolate tart with coconut sorbet and hazelnut sauce—this chocolate loam is dense and gooey, and it gets pleasantly messy. Chef Terrance Brennan roasts foie gras with cinnamon, an unanticipated sensation, while the organic-squash-and-mushroom ravioli, with brown butter, walnuts, sage, and black truffles, practically knocked me off my chair. Moroccan-spiced loin of lamb with vegetable couscous, mint, and sheep's-milk yogurt is beautifully arranged in a little flower. The paper-thin slices of cucumber—the bridesmaids on the plate, with the horseradish-crusted-salmon bride—create another delectable tableau.

The Belmont Lounge

WHY: There's something for everyone at this Union Square hot spot, where owner Guy Jacobson has embraced the lounge concept fully with couches, coffee tables, etc. Reserve the back room for your party and you can have the pleasure of bypassing the velvet-rope fray. Steal away to the game room for some high-stakes backgammon, or hobnob with celebrity patrons such as Ewan McGregor, Marisa Tomei, Mariah Carey, and Mark Wahlberg. D.J.'s spin Wednesday through Saturday, but don't get caught writhing too enthusiastically—the Belmont doesn't have a cabaret license.

ADDRESS: 117 East 15th Street. **CONTACT:** Ross Hutkoff (533-0009). **ACCOMMODATES:** The private back room holds up to 80 standing people (40 seated). There is also a garden behind it that holds an additional 30 people, open in late March. **COST:** $12 per person per hour for an open bar during non-peak times, plus tax and gratuity. The room fee varies; be sure to ask. At peak times, the open-bar rates are higher, and a higher room rate will apply as well. A selection of six appetizers can be served for the duration of your party, for an additional $12 per person.

Verbena

WHY: Another snug and unpretentious space with spectacular, sophisticated food and a tariff that is more than worth it. The private-party facility is a diminutive carriage-house room off the kitchen. The homey room has fifteen-foot ceilings, exposed-brick walls, and slate floors.

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ADDRESS: 54 Irving Place, between 17th and 18th Streets. **CONTACT:** Laura Breen (260-5454). **ACCOMMODATES:** 20 seated; 25 for cocktails. (N.B.: In the warm months, the garden can be used for private parties of up to 75 seated, 100 for cocktails. **COST:** Starts at $75 per person, for three courses; alcohol per consumption. Tax and 20 percent gratuity added. Brunches start at $45 per person. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Butternut-squash ravioli is an ordeal to make—it's a shame that it requires but a micro-flash to consume. First, the squash is roasted and then puréed with ricotta; then a hint of burnt-orange oil is added to the mix. Tuna, seared in a coriander crust, is complemented with braised bok choy, minted cucumbers, potato gratin, and a red-pepper romesco sauce. Saddle of rabbit is bacon-wrapped and filled with millet and collard greens, in a spiced mole sauce. End with untraditional crème brûlée—there's no "brûlée" on the melt-in-your-mouth, creamy custard. Instead, it is crowned with an oversize buttery lace-cookie bonnet, ruched and rippled like a swatch of pliant fabric.

14 Wall Street

WHY: With a majestic view from the windows of the thirty-first floor of this building, you can feel a little like J. P. Morgan, who had a residence within. Although various spaces here lend themselves to being closed off for private parties, it is the separate Breakfast Room (discreetly tucked behind the bar) that steals the show. The room itself is

PARTY SMART

A FEW POINTERS AND CAVEATS: Taking over that favorite neighborhood watering hole for your birthday may seem inspired; you reason that you and your steady usually escape for less than $80 for two—tax, tip, and a glass of wine each—so you figure that a party of twenty should cost you about $800. Or maybe you could invite a few more revelers and take over the whole place. Not so fast: Unless you're prepared to cover the restaurant's closing costs—i.e., the amount it would take in for an entire evening's business—it's much more cost effective to commandeer a spot with a dedicated party room (which, with only an exception or two, is what we did here), where the menus and fees have already been costed out. Party packages will be better priced on a slow night and at a slow time of year than on a busy weeknight or in November or December. And if you *do* decide to take over a restaurant, do it when the door is already shut. Anything the owner makes then is found money. For example, the romantic, tiny restaurant March costs a minimum of $9,500 to take over for a dinner party but is closed for lunch; have your party then and the minimum drops to $7,500. JUdson Grill, which would cost $20,000 to take over on a weeknight, is shuttered for lunch Saturday and all day Sunday; if you want the space at either of those times, it could cost as little as $6,000. Fees are nearly always negotiable.

When you book a hotel space, you're also hiring a team that has everything on site or knows how to fulfill your request with maximum efficiency. Catering costs are generally broken down into room charges, food and beverage fees, staff tariff, and miscellaneous costs (taxes, gratuity, security, coat check, etc.). Be sure to arrange an in-depth tasting, and remember that if you want to bring in your own wine or cake, the charge can be tantamount to pickpocketry. Tuscan Square, for example, charges a staggering corkage fee of $25 per bottle. At ABC Parlour Cafe, it's $10. You can also incur a slicing or plate fee for bringing your own cake.

When interviewing the manager of a banquet facility, come armed with a list of things to investigate: dance floor; sound system; air-conditioning (amazingly, several places I saw have no A/C); wheelchair access; security; rest-room-attendant and coat-check-room fees; weekend, freight-elevator, and loading-dock access; valet parking; cancellation penalties and payment schedule. Your contract should include everything; the goal is no surprises.

If, on the other hand, you rent a loft-style space, you basically become your own general contractor. Top caterers can equip any space—from trucking in water to ordering the tableware, linens, liquor, flowers, and so on. Be clear about the length of time you'll have. At the TriBeCa Gallery (New York Academy of Art) and Milk Studios, for example, 24 hours is standard, an excellent deal that's also a necessity when you're decorating a place.

And finally: In order to spotlight newer places, we've omitted some venerable party sites you may also wish to consider, such as the Rainbow Suites, Windows on the World, the Hudson River Club, the River Cafe, the Water Club, Gramercy Tavern, the Four Seasons, "21," La Grenouille, La Côte Basque, Glorious Food, to name just a few. Also, many popular neighborhood restaurants are well priced, have great food, and will supply special services. And bear in mind that many of our choices would comfortably fit in more than one category, and that many of these venues have more than one room. R.J.K.

plain: boardroom-style table, terra-cotta floor, and mahogany wainscoting. Morgan had his petit déjeuner here daily. It also helps that the upscale contemporary French cooking is quite affordable; the chef is Frederic Feufeu from Le Taxi, and the food runs neck-and-neck with the view.

ADDRESS: 14 Wall Street. **CONTACT:** Patrick Barragan (233-2780). **ACCOMMODATES:** Up to 18. **COST:** Starting price for breakfast, $10; for lunch and dinner, $35 to $100 for three-course meals. Alcohol is per consumption; there is also a $75 room charge. Tax and 20 percent gratuity added. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** Start out with foie gras au torchon, marinated in port and Sancerre and then poached in oxtail consommé, served with apples and toast; it's a pretty rich appetizer, but if the elevator goes on the fritz, think of all the exercise you'll get walking down. Black-pepper-seared tuna carpaccio is surrounded by a tangy citrus salsa. For another take on salmon, try the sautéed version here, paired with morel, black-trumpet, chanterelle, and hen-of-the-wood mushrooms in a vegetable consommé, with staccato hints of white-truffle oil, served with a purée of celery root and a quenelle of pumpkin purée. For dessert, there is, among other noteworthy treats, a chocolate cake with warm ganache, raspberry liqueur, and banana, all wrapped in phyllo dough.

Chibi's Sake & Wine Bar (in the Kitchen Club)

WHY: A cozy, well-priced neighborhood hangout, with satisfying fusion cuisine. Chef-owner Marja Samsom's new petite sake bar is a family affair, and you'll feel all the more at home here because of that: Her Japanese-born husband, Akiro Tasaka, selected the dozen or so sakes stocked in the bar. In the next few months, she'll be adding some boutique champagnes, Petrossian caviar, and kumamoto (miniature Japanese oysters). The tiny, tranquil room is dressed nicely in butterscotch and earth tones.

ADDRESS: 30 Prince Street. **CONTACT:** Marja Samsom (274-0025). **ACCOMMODATES:** Up to 25. **COST:** $525 minimum. Alcohol is per consumption. Tax and 20 percent gratuity are added. **A LITTLE MORE ABOUT THE FOOD:** You'll have choices like the homemade dumplings with shiitake mushrooms, fragrant with ginger, a little garlic, and soy; the lobster in puff pastry, gently splashed with a light mayonnaise-based sauce (with shiso and wasabi), capped with tobiko, a flying-fish roe. There is also an ambrosial tray of appetizer delicacies, which could be worked into a party menu. Daily fresh-fish specials, and such regular-menu dishes as the roast galantine of guinea hen, leg of lamb Provençal, and grilled organic chicken breast stuffed with wasabi, can be worked into the party menu as well.

Next week: From engagement shower to fiftieth-wedding-anniversary party, the best places to celebrate your vows.

Additional reporting by Kris McNeil.

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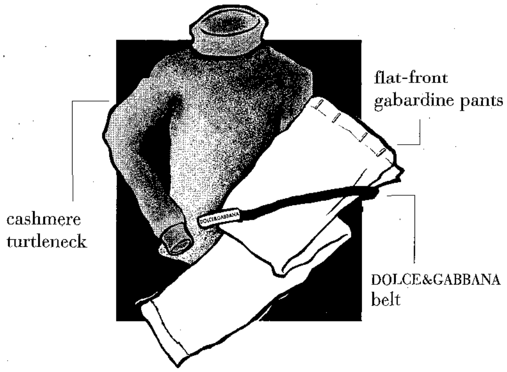
Grilled Modesto Valley Squab.



At Mark's, we're more concerned about what you're eating than what you're wearing. So experience the clubby atmosphere and innovative cuisine that *Zagat* calls "NYC's best kept secret..." But please, wear what you like.

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MARK'S
RESTAURANT & BAR

Madison Avenue at East 77th St. 212-879-1864

What's WRONG *with* THIS Picture?

No one knew exactly where **Carlos Gomez**'s money came from—certainly not from his Citibank job—but no one seemed to [illegible] of it. He and his wife, **Alison Spear** lived lavishly on the East Side and in the Hamptons and spent their way into uptown society. But when he was arrested for embezzlement last month, even as [illegible] to [illegible] married.

BY RUTH G. DAVIS AND BRADEN & BETH KEIL • PHOTOGRAPH BY OBERTO GILI

ALMOST PERFECT: Carlos Gomez with his wife, Alison, and her son Jeremy on the beach in the Hamptons.

“I'm the dummy in this,” trills Alison Spear in her disarmingly sweet tones. Just over a month ago, her husband, Carlos Gomez, was arrested for embezzling $10 million from his employers at Citibank. Last week, while Gomez was biding his time in their Park Avenue apartment awaiting legal proceedings, the architect and interior designer sat in her office on East 70th Street and told *New York* she was more startled than anyone about the charges. “I assumed the money was from investments, just like everyone else. What was I *supposed* to do, check up on my husband?” ■ Since then, talk of Gomez's arrest has dominated the arty dinner parties and Junior League circles in which the charismatic Cuban banker and his pretty blonde wife had traveled since their marriage in 1994. Photogenic, likable, and ambitious, the couple successfully mounted an assault on Upper East Side society, acquiring in short order a stunning apartment on Park Avenue, a million-dollar house in Sagaponack, and positions on the boards of some of the city's most prominent cultural institutions. In 1996, Spear chaired a gala benefit for the New York City Ballet, and they serve on junior committees for the New York Public Library and the Museum of the City of New York. Late last year, Gomez was named to the board of trustees of the New Museum.

Their two homes were showcased in a glossy photo feature in *Harper's Bazaar* in 1996, in which Alison was described as an “elegant Park Avenue diva” and Gomez as the owner of a “sizable collection of brightly hued modern Latin American art.”

Fond of grand flourishes, Gomez draped his wife in expensive couture and lavish estate jewelry. At Christmas, he confided in friends about the latest gift he hoped to present to Alison—a $20,000 Asprey ring. To celebrate his 40th birthday last month, he invited a group of close friends on a trip to Mexico—all expenses paid. The plans were later dropped.

IN JANUARY, THE ELABORATE FAÇADE CAME CRASHING DOWN. A month after leaving Citibank to start his own investment firm, Gomez was arrested and charged with setting up a series of fraudulent accounts and fake identities that investigators are still trying to unravel. He surrendered to the FBI through his lawyer and was released on a $1 million personal-recognizance bond, signed by his wife and parents as well as by friends including floral designer Helena Lehane and Michael Giordano, a celebrated AIDS doctor at New York Hospital.

“I never quizzed Carlos about financial sources,” his wife insist

Currently restricted to the immediate area, Gomez may face up to 30 years in prison. In addition, Citibank has filed a civil suit against him seeking to retrieve at least $13 million, and a judge has ordered all his assets frozen. Lawyers from Citibank have begun to close the net, deposing Gomez's business associates and gathering evidence of the couple's spending, including Alison's credit-card statements.

In an era of bull-market fortunes and outlandish bonuses, Gomez's lavish lifestyle didn't seem all that unusual. But in retrospect, it shouldn't have been hard to figure out that he was living beyond his means. As a private banker at Citibank, he earned a salary estimated at $200,000; the annual maintenance payments on their apartment alone came to about $50,000. “I'm sort of amazed on the one hand, and not so amazed on the other,” says Jay McInerney, an old client of Alison's. “It seemed like they were living large for a while there.”

Friends and acquaintances repeatedly claim that the charming, genial Gomez was not the kind of person they would ever associate with such a crime. Most of their acquaintances assumed the couple was spending a generous inheritance. Alison claims she never asked where her husband's money came from.

“I never quizzed Carlos about any financial sources. I don't think *any* lady would have,” she told *New York*. “I feel like Carlos is someone who couldn't have done something like this. Right now, today, I'm standing behind him, and I'm working and living moment to moment.”

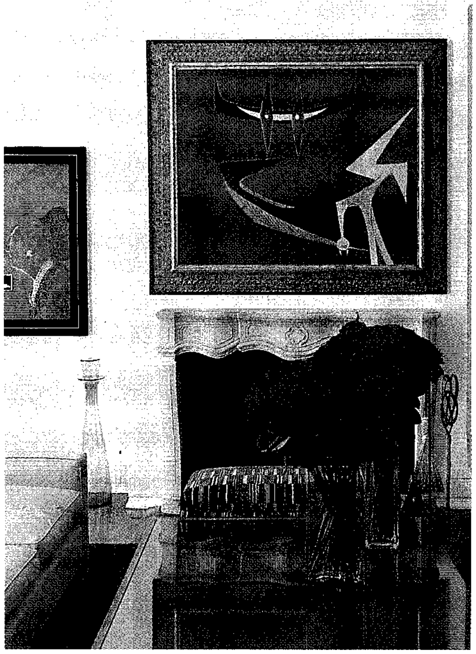
Nonetheless, on the advice of her lawyer, she recently made an attempt to get veto power over any settlement with Citibank, and to have Gomez turn over any remaining assets to her and her children. If he didn't, Alison warned, she would remove her name from the recognizance bond keeping him out of jail. Gomez's attorney, the high-powered Stanley Arkin, scoffed at the demand, and she backed down. “If the charges turn out to be true, I can't say what I would do,” Alison says now, although she has already hired another lawyer. “I try not to talk about it, and Carlos is not at liberty to discuss details with me. I can't really plan anything for the future, but I have a great job, two wonderful children and a supportive family.”

SINCE HIS ARREST, FRIENDS HAVE PORTRAYED CARLOS GOMEZ AS A modern-day Jay Gatsby, and like Fitzgerald's love-struck parvenu, he has always been elusive about his background. Some claim Gomez grew up in a shack near the Havana airport. Others say he was the heir to an immense sugarcane fortune. The truth is more conventionally middle-class. Born in Havana, Gomez moved with his family in the sixties to Miami, where his father worked as a manufacturing consultant.

By the time he got to Georgetown's School of Foreign Services in 1976, he already had a certain mannered air about him. “When he first came on the scene, there were a lot of people who didn't believe his act of being Cuban aristocracy, especially the Cuban expatriates who lived in the area,” recalls a Georgetown contemporary. “For someone who claimed to have had so much, he had a limited wardrobe and no private transportation.” After graduating in 1980, Gomez did a stint as a newscaster at a Spanish-language cable station. He began his banking career at Chase in New York and moved to Citibank a few years later. He decamped to England in 1989 to get a certificate in drama and literature from Oxford University. But in May 1991, he returned to his old post in Citibank's private-banking division, where he served as a personal liaison to the bank's wealthy Latin American clientele, a task that his employers say he performed with skill and charm.

Back in New York, Gomez became involved in a long-term romantic relationship with Eric Javits, a successful hat designer and the grandnephew of the late senator Jacob Javits. The well-connected milliner gave him entrée into a world of conspicuous consumption that contrasted sharply with his own rather modest life. At the same time that Gomez was sharing canapés at Doubles, the private eating club in the Sherry-Netherland Hotel, with socialites like Averell Mortimer and James Fairchild, he was living in a humble rental on East 36th Street and struggling to pay his taxes—in 1992, he had an outstanding bill of $9,633 from the New York State Tax Commission.

According to court documents, in 1991, three months after his return to Citibank, Gomez began to set up the embezzlement scheme that would finance his new life. He also decided that it might be time to settle down with a wife. "He wanted to lead a charmed, straight life," says a friend.



RICH REWARDS: Left to right, the couple's country home in Sagaponack and their Park Avenue apartment were both decorated by Alison, bottom.

on't think *any* lady would have."

WHEN GOMEZ MET ALISON SPEAR IN 1992 AT A PARTY AT DOUBLES, his future wife was was 33 years old and still reeling from a bitter divorce. Like Gomez, Spear was originally from Miami. The daughter of a respected surgeon, she had had a privileged upbringing. One of three children, Spear lived for most of her childhood in the shadow of her older sister, Laurinda, who would become a founder of the architecture firm Arquitectonica. While Alison was in college, the family moved into a house Laurinda had designed as part of her graduate-school thesis. But driven and energetic, Alison had talents of her own as well as an innate sense of style when it came to clothing and interiors.

"She was always ahead of the curve," recalls a friend from her youth. "Alison has impeccable taste. She has an inner radar about finding perfect pieces of clothing and mixing styles, and she makes everything look effortless."

Shortly after college, Spear decided to pursue a career in interior design and enrolled at the Columbia School of Architecture. While there, she fell in love with a fellow student named Campion Platt, a former model who came from a socially prominent Boston family. Their wedding was a week-long affair for family and friends in Miami. Amid the revelry, Platt's sister and Spear's brother met; later they had a child together.

The newlywed couple settled in a loft in the Flatiron district, where they fell in with a fast downtown set made up of well-off artists, models, and club owners. The golden couple were dubbed "Downtown's New Aristocrats" by *Avenue* magazine, along with André Balazs, Platt's partner in the early stages of the Mercer Hotel, and Balazs's wife, Katie Ford. "It was a very fun and hedonistic time," recalls a member of the clique who went to Alison's 30th-birthday party in Miami, where the bud-

Photographs by Oberto Gili.

ding socialites shed their swimsuits for a game of Marco Polo in the family pool. "It was about having a good time, looking good, and getting press."

Spear and Platt proved particularly adept at the latter—columnists eagerly covered lavish parties they threw with such celebrated eighties revelers as Area owner Eric Goode and his then girlfriend, South African model Josie Borain. Platt drew attention for his work on the Mercer Hotel and the MercBar, and Spear's design firm began attracting high-profile clients like McInerney, Francis Ford Coppola, and, of course, Katie Ford and André Balazs.

But in 1991, the tight-knit group began to unravel. After a financial dispute, Balazs and Platt bitterly dissolved their partnership, and Spear and Platt were embroiled in a nasty divorce before their son was even a year old. "Alison was always trying to help Campion's career, and he had invested in a Miami hotel that lost money. She felt financially burned," says another in the clique. "Alison didn't think I was making enough for her," her ex-husband concedes.

Jill Brooke, a CNN correspondent who was a friend of Spear's at the time, recalls her saying, "If I only had $100 in my bank account, I'd still spend it that day on champagne and caviar."

The breakup of her marriage didn't keep Spear from entertaining, usually with a writer or editor around to record the event. To celebrate Jeremy's 1st birthday, in the middle of her divorce, she hired a downtown party organizer who produced an ornate carnival theme for guests, complete with llamas and ponies. She marked his 2nd birthday with a lavish catered party at Rumplemeyers.

However flush she appeared in public, friends say that in private Spear complained that she was financially strapped. Says one, "I remember her not being able to pay her nanny, but she always had fabulous Manolo Blahniks." One of her boyfriends from that time, restaurateur Peter Stephan, says, "Her level of energy was near hysteria. Every night, there was a different party or event. It was a relentless ride through the social circle."

"Carlos sold himself as this rich guy," says a friend, "and he prol

ALISON SPEAR AND CARLOS GOMEZ BEGAN DATING in the spring of 1993, after he hired her to redecorate his new apartment. "There's no doubt that she was very attracted to Carlos. He was a gracious, classy guy and extremely dedicated to becoming a heterosexual family man," remembers one friend. His apparent wealth was an added inducement. Eager to get married, Carlos did not disappoint. He showered Spear with gifts—cashmere scarfs and Dolce & Gabbana dresses from Barneys.

Gomez's affair with Javits was an open secret, and friends cautioned her against falling in love with a bisexual man, no matter how intently he pursued her. "It was a roller coaster, and there were a lot of issues, whether he was straight or not, whether his intentions were genuine," says one friend of Alison's. "It was really hard, but it was harder being a single mom, and Carlos would be able to provide for them." Another acquaintance of Alison's from that time is less charitable: "She wanted the stuff so badly, it didn't matter that he was gay."

But while many of their acquaintances were openly skeptical of the match, others were supportive. "Everyone felt like, *Good, she met a really nice guy and he wants to get married and have kids.* Their relationship worked," says one of her old crowd. "I saw them one night at a party at Sotheby's, and they looked like picture-book newlyweds—the archetypal Upper East Side couple," recalls another acquaintance. "They were clutching hands and gazing into a glass vitrine with the most enormous diamonds."

In November 1994, two years after they met, Gomez and Spear were married at an intimate ceremony in Coconut Grove, near Spear's parents' home. For their friends in New York, they also hosted a party at the Yale Club, far from the watering holes Spear used to frequent. "A lot of her old friends were there, and they said, 'This is probably the last time we'll ever see her,' " says one attendee. "I think Carlos put weight on her to move her circle more uptown."

EVEN BEFORE HIS MARRIAGE, CITIBANK CHARGES, Gomez had already started manipulating funds for his own benefit. According to court documents, in January 1993, he instructed that two $5 million loans from Citibank be deposited into accounts under the names of Fernando Calleja and Bernabe Villanueva. (Gomez is alleged to have set up the accounts, with forged signatures, when he first returned to Citibank in 1991.) The Fernando Calleja account was completely fictitious—Gomez allegedly told his superiors that Fernando was the brother of an El Salvadoran Citibank customer named Francisco Calleja. Villanueva was an authentic Citibank customer. The loans were approved, collateralized by the assets of the real Calleja and Villanueva.

Gomez then allegedly opened accounts under the name of an old friend from Georgetown, Jose Ignacio Joaristi. A Cuban émigré, Joaristi had been best man in Gomez's wedding and lived in New York in the early eighties before moving to Costa Rica. According to Joaristi's lawyer, Gomez falsely portrayed his client as a wealthy industrialist, set up an account in his name, and then funneled the $10 million through Joaristi's account and into two offshore investment companies in the Bahamas, where it was used to borrow an additional $9 million from Citibank. Because Gomez routinely carried out such transfers, his activities aroused no suspicion. "There were simply insufficient controls back then, but I'm surprised that he could have kept doing it as long as he did," says someone who worked with Gomez in the private-banking division. (The same division is currently under investigation on charges of laundering money for the once-powerful Salinas clan of Mexico.)

Although the investigation is still under way, Citibank now believes Gomez started to manipulate accounts before 1993, about the same time he began his shopping spree. Gomez bought a penthouse apartment at 205 East 69th Street for $600,000 in December 1992, spending an additional $400,000 to have Alison remodel it. In November 1993, Gomez bought a Louise Bourgeois sculpture from the Robert Miller Gallery for $157,000, allegedly paying for it with money lent to the fictional Fernando Calleja. To cover his tracks, Gomez sent in a note with the check: "Do not ref[erence] me on remitter as this is from my offshore Priv[ate] Inv[estment] Co. Have a good holiday."

Howard Reed, a former Robert Miller employee who has since started his own gallery, says, "I didn't think anything about it. I didn't really know *what* he did, except that he was at Citibank, but there are a lot of people out there who seem like they make a lot of money, especially these days." Gomez also had a VIP account at Christie's, which he used to purchase decorative pieces and jewelry in the $10,000-to-$20,000 range. "He was invited to all the parties, and we thought he was important in his social and business circle," says the customer-service representative who handled Gomez's account. "Normally, the department only handles transactions of $1 million, but we thought it would be a good policy to have him included."

The couple's spending certainly accelerated after they were married. "Carlos had sold himself as this rich guy," says one well-connected observer, "and he probably felt that he had to deliver the goods. He was trying to keep her happy, and she didn't question it. It's like a romantic disaster."

In April 1995, the couple bought a ten-room apartment on upper Park Avenue for $1.6 million. The monthly maintenance alone was more than $4,000, and they spent generously on renovations. Since the apartment had just been converted from rental to co-op, they did not have to get board approval, which would have required some kind of scrutiny of their finances. A month later, they closed on a $1 million house in Sagaponack, an old farm on Sagg Road previously owned by George Plimpton. Gomez made the purchase through South Fork Limited, an offshore company incorporated under Joaristi's name. (Gomez didn't sell his place on 69th Street until after buying both the Park Avenue co-op and the house in Sagaponack, and he only broke even on the sale.)

Open House

Street of Dreams

LIFE IMITATES ART AT 1000 PARK AVENUE.
BY ANDREW KAY

Sherman McCoy, "master of the universe" and
broker of Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, gloried
fact that he lived in one of the expansive horizontal mansio
on Park Avenue in the years just before World War I. With
ments even larger than those erected during the 1920s, hug
boxes like 1000 Park, *on the northwest corner of* Eighty-

Street, lured that era's robber barons out of their vast town houses with the promise of comfort and convenience on Manhattan's most exclusive boulevard. Today, in an ironic plot twist, venerable 1000 Park on Sherman McCoy's "street of dreams" is home to a real-life embattled banker, Carlos Gómez, who is currently charged with defrauding Citibank of $10 million.

Commissioned in 1915, 1000 Park Avenue was constructed during a short-lived boom that was eventually curtailed by wartime restrictions. The
following July, the *Real Estat*
& Builders Guide proclai
the "Year of the Landlord."
September, agents were
shortages of apartments; rent
ten percent by July 1917, resu
state rent control legislation.
creased war effort halted furthe
struction until after the Armis

The building at 1000 Park was
ly collaboration between Bing &
the foremost management fir
time, and Emory Roth, the
most often credited with inventi
modern apartment. Departing fro
traditional railroad-flat layout by c
ating a central entry foyer with
and sleeping areas well separated,
Park Avenue epitomized an
grand-scale living. More than
years later, the sprawling layouts
tinue to lure New York's
cognoscenti, including architect
Spear and Suzanne Slesin,

Emory Roth's sprawli layouts—the epitome of grand-scale living—lure New York's design cognoscenti today.

PARK VIEWS: *Rising above it all in 1954; right: Alison Spear and Jeremy in the master bedroom, opposite.*

14 QUEST

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAURA MC

PRETTY IN PRINT: Alison is prominently featured in the March issue of *Quest*.

ly felt he had to deliver the goods. It's like a romantic disaster."

Gomez and Spear's marriage seemed to grow stronger as their joint assets grew. "Their being together seemed to bring out the best in both of them," says one friend. "It would appear to be an old New York story of a couple trying to unite to conquer society together, but they're not purely arriviste. It wasn't just for getting ahead; it was very clear it had more depth to it." Alison got pregnant in January 1996 and gave birth to a daughter, Carolina. "To me, when she had the baby, that was all I needed to know that she's happy and that he loved her," says an old friend of Alison's. "It was sort of a sign to the naysayers."

The family of four would go on safari in Africa with a nanny in tow, or to Costa Rica or to Mexico, and all their friends assumed that the bills were being paid by a seemingly endless source of family money. To those who knew better, Gomez floated a different tale. He told his friend Joaristi that he had first made a large commission selling real estate in Mexico to one of his clients and had then increased that amount by trading options.

But by 1997, Citibank officials began to wonder about all his lavish new acquisitions. According to sources at the bank, when Gomez was questioned last year by internal auditors, he told them he had inherited some money. By then, he had already started paying off the interest on the loan—not with his own money, Citibank claims, but with $1.4 million he borrowed from another client's account—but the entire $10 million principal was still outstanding. In September 1997, he incorporated a company called Reliance Investment Consultants, and in December, he and another banker in the Mexican division left Citibank to set up their own shop. "We believe the other banker was innocently involved," says Jack Morris, a Citibank spokesman. After he left, Gomez moved to liquidate the Joaristi accounts at Citibank and ordered the assets transferred to his new company.

It was a poorly planned exit strategy. Citibank had not yet acted on his orders when Gomez's replacement called Francisco Calleja to inquire about the loans. Calleja had never heard of the loans, or of Fernando Calleja. When questioned on January 23 by the vice-president of legal affairs for Citibank, Gomez said he had only been acting on Francisco Calleja's instructions, and also claimed that the transfers from the two original fraudulent accounts to the Joaristi-controlled accounts was a payment arising from a business transaction. But Joaristi—who is cooperating with Citibank and federal prosecutors—maintains that Gomez forged his name and set up offshore accounts without his knowledge. "The whole situation is very tough on him," says Joaristi's lawyer, Mark Schnapp. "This was a very close friend of his, and at the same time that he's shocked by the transactions, he feels bad that Carlos messed up his life like this."

ODDLY, DESPITE HER PROFESSED IGNORANCE, few of the couple's friends perceive Alison as a victim. "Part of the reason people are less than sympathetic to Alison is that she was very smug about her social position and what she had achieved," adds a Hamptons friend. "It was like, 'Here I am, back with a vengeance.' She utterly dominated him. She would say, 'Let's buy this; let's be high-profile.' She was the leader."

Though Gomez has kept a low profile since his arrest, the couple has begun to make a few social *(continued on page 73)*

Photograph by Steven Freeman.

The best of all possible things to buy, see, and do in the best of all possible cities

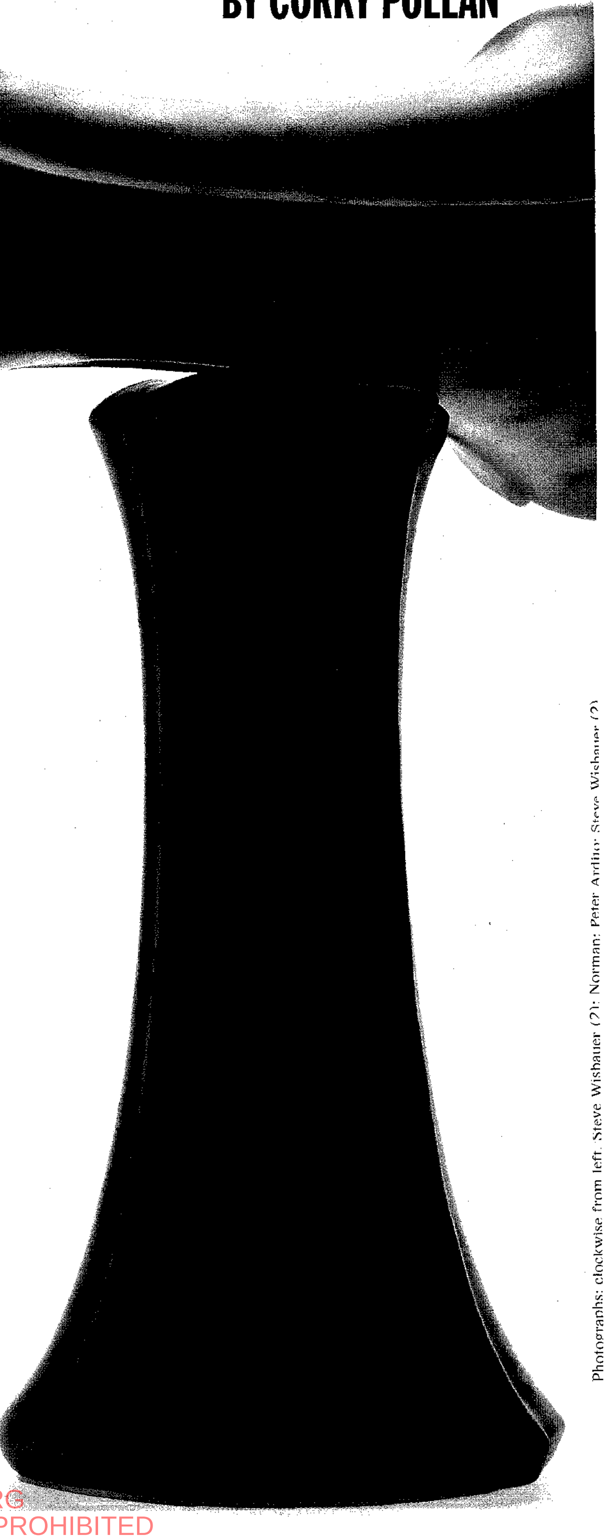
BEST BETS

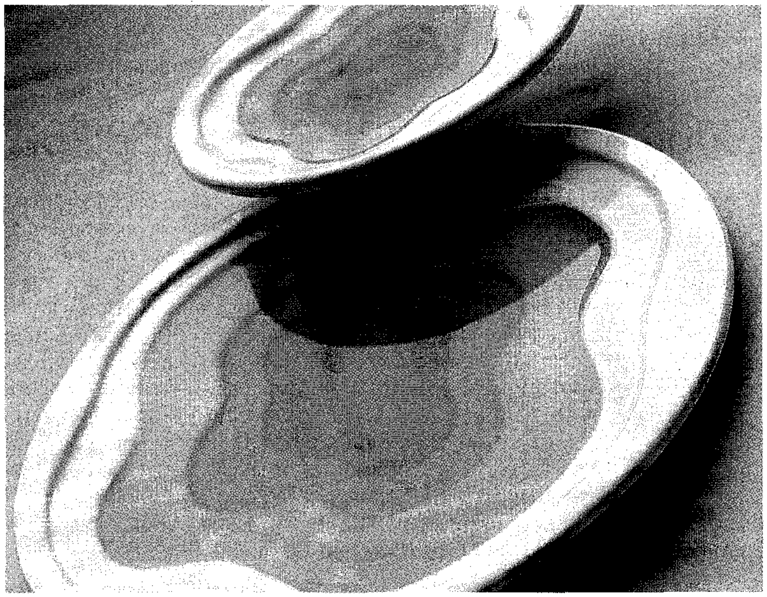
BY CORKY POLLAN

Candle Power

Though James Klein and David Reid are fairly new on the ceramics scene (they set up their Brooklyn atelier in 1993), Klein/Reid porcelain vases have appeared in the pages of all the slickest shelter magazines and popped up in the chic-est apartments. Organic forms, matte glazes, and subtle referencing to ancient Korean pottery, the Arts and Crafts movement, and modernism account for the vases' appeal. Now the partners bring these distinguishing qualities to candlesticks ($70 a pair).

AERO/*132 Spring Street/966-1500*



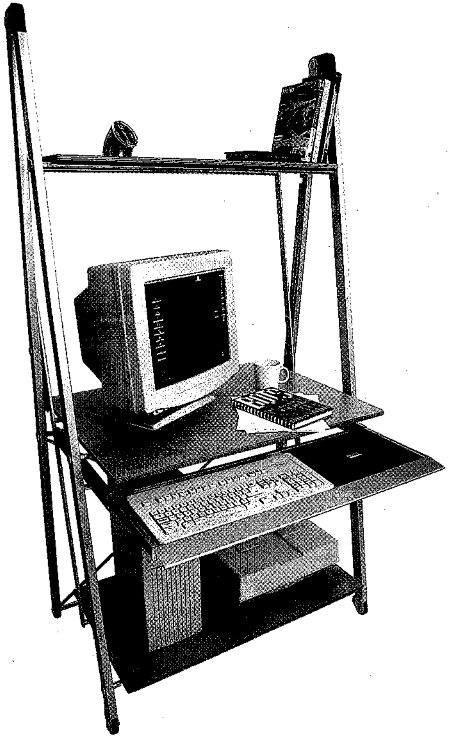


A Bread Winner

New York artist Mary Judge—who spends summers in Deruta, Italy, at the historic Grazia ceramics studio—has come up with a fabulous version of those little plates used for dipping bread in olive oil. Judge works in majolica-glazed terra-cotta and uses a jiggering process, a mold, and a metal template to create swirly plates for pooling oil ($30 and $50).

SHI/*233 Elizabeth Street/334-4330*

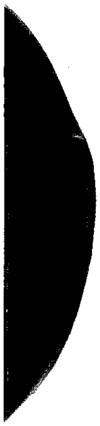
Photographs: clockwise from left: Steve Wisbauer (2); Norman; Peter Ardito; Steve Wisbauer (2)

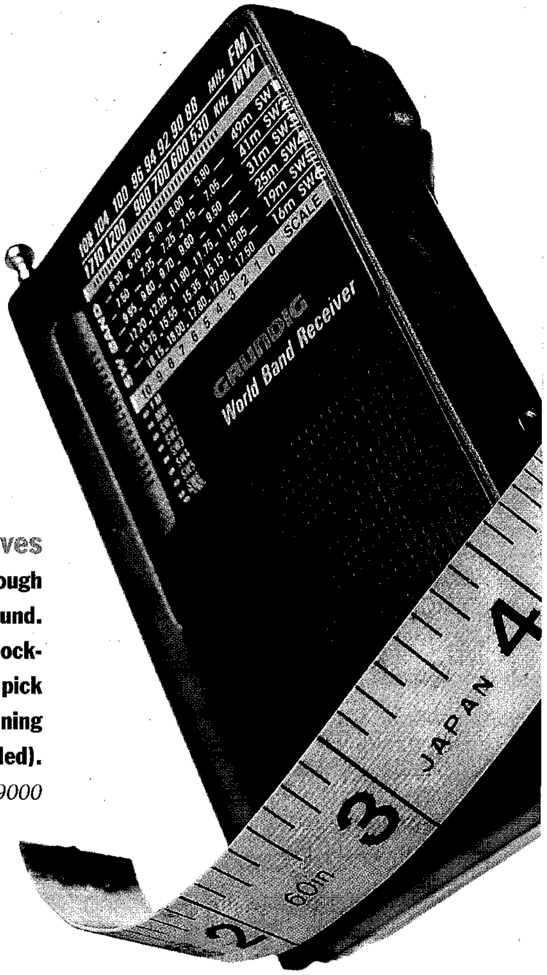


When the Mouse Is Away

It comes from Italy, but Raul Barbieri's foldable computer desk is consummately New York. His Banco is lightweight yet sturdy, closes in seconds, and, when folded, is six inches wide. The frame is aluminum; the shelves (there's a pull-out one for keyboard and mouse) are beech-veneer plywood ($1,030).

MOSS/*146 Greene Street*
226-2190





New Waves

The forties analogue to today's satellite receiver was the shortwave radio. Though it provided instant worldwide communication, it was too bulky to lug around. Grundig's new Mini World 100, however, is one of the smallest made; shirt-pocket-size, it can travel anywhere. It has a powerful telescopic antenna that can pick up six shortwave international bands as well as AM/FM signals, and its LED tuning indicator and earphones make listening easy ($49.99; AA batteries not included).

J & R MUSIC AND COMPUTER WORLD/*31 Park Row/238-9000*

Dognip

Think of the Wufer Ball as your pooch's personal trainer. Since it rolls haphazardly and makes a curious sound (it's filled with gravel), the ball will keep your pet intrigued and active for hours. The Wufer is made of high-density polyethylene, so it's virtually chew-proof, and it comes in two sizes and three sharp colors ($10 and $18).

MXYPLYZYK/*125 Greenwich Avenue, near 13th Street/989-4300*

SALES & BARGAINS **ONDINE COHANE**

Sale of the Century

Don't forget this anniversary: *Corcoran, for Greater New York's hundredth birthday, knocks* **$100,000** *off apartment prices. (Housewarming flowers, $9.97.)*

IN AN UNUSUAL CELEBRATION OF THE hundredth anniversary of Greater New York, Corcoran Group Real Estate has put together a group of exclusive apartments for many budgets that have been reduced by $100,000 or more. For example, a Fifth Avenue apartment in the low Eighties with ten rooms, was $2.5 million, now $2.4 million; Park Avenue one-bedroom, was $395,000, now $295,000; West Side penthouse with park views, was $1,070,000, now $950,000. *Call Debra Wynter at the Corcoran Group (848-0446); Mon.–Fri. 9–6; while inventory lasts.*

Quick Retreat

YOGA, STRESS REDUCTION, MEDITATION, Pilates, nutrition, women's health, and homeopathy: The organizers of this weekend (April 24–26) have combined all of the best elements of integrative medicine without the touchy-feely aspects that make some people uncomfortable. And the weekend includes the use of the spa facilities and meals at Gurney's Inn in Montauk—one of the very best spas on Eastern Long Island. If you register before the end of March, you'll get $50 off (price includes accommodations, workshops, and meals). For example, double occupancy in ocean-view room, will be $495, now $445; single occupancy in beachfront room, will be $645, now $595. You also receive a discounted spa pass ($15 instead of $20) and $100 off any future holistic cruise. *Call 414-9257 to register or for more information; M.C., V.; Mon.–Fri. 9:30–6:30; through 3/31.*

A Low Vera

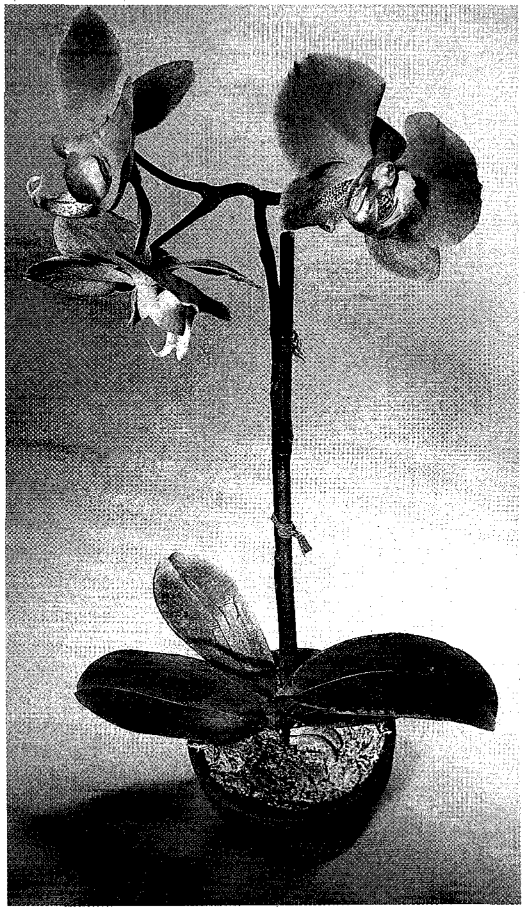
THE REIGNING QUEEN OF BRIDAL DESIGNERS—Vera Wang—is having one of her highly anticipated sample sales: Ivory off-the-shoulder satin wedding gown, retail $3,475, here $1,500; A-line satin wedding gown, retail $2,825, here $1,300; short charcoal bridesmaid dress, retail $260, here $30; long evening gown, retail $1,790, here $350. *Hotel Pennsylvania, Penntop Ballroom, 401 Seventh Ave., near 33rd St., eighteenth floor (575-6400); A.E., M.C., V.; Sat. 9–5; 3/7.*

Chez Deal

TO CELEBRATE THE TWENTIETH BIRTHDAY OF her cozy French bistro, chef-owner Jacqueline Zini is putting together a special $20 menu. The full carte—reprising the one from opening day—includes mussels Titou, a seafood casserole, and a lemon tart. *Chez Jacqueline, 72 MacDougal St. (505-0727); A.E., M.C., V.; lunch Mon.–Fri. noon–3, dinner Mon.–Thurs. 6–11, Fri. and Sat. till 11:30, Sun. till 10:30; through 3/31.*

DO NOT PHONE: Send suggestions to Ondine Cohane, *New York* Magazine, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022-6999, six weeks before the sale. Only sales exclusive to "Sales & Bargains" and not previously advertised or published elsewhere will be considered.

Must-Have **Kmart's $9.97 is an unheard-of price for the bloom du jour, the orchid; at least $60 to $70, and way up, is the norm. *Kmart, 770 Broadway, at 8th St. (673-1540); A.E., M.C., V.; Mon.–Fri. 9–10, Sat. 10–9, Sun. 11–8; shipments come in on Mondays and Wednesdays.***



Touting Their Horns

COWTAN & TOUT—AN UPSCALE AND LUSH fabric importer—is having a huge warehouse sale on hundreds of materials (including cottons, silks, and damasks) at deep discounts. Fabric that retailed for $40–$80 a yard, now $10 a yard; fabric that was $100–$200 a yard, now $30 a yard; fabric that was $175–$400 a yard, now $50 a yard. *Cowtan & Tout, 40 W. 40th St. (647-6921); A.E., M.C., V.; Fri.–Sat. 9–6; 3/6–3/7.*

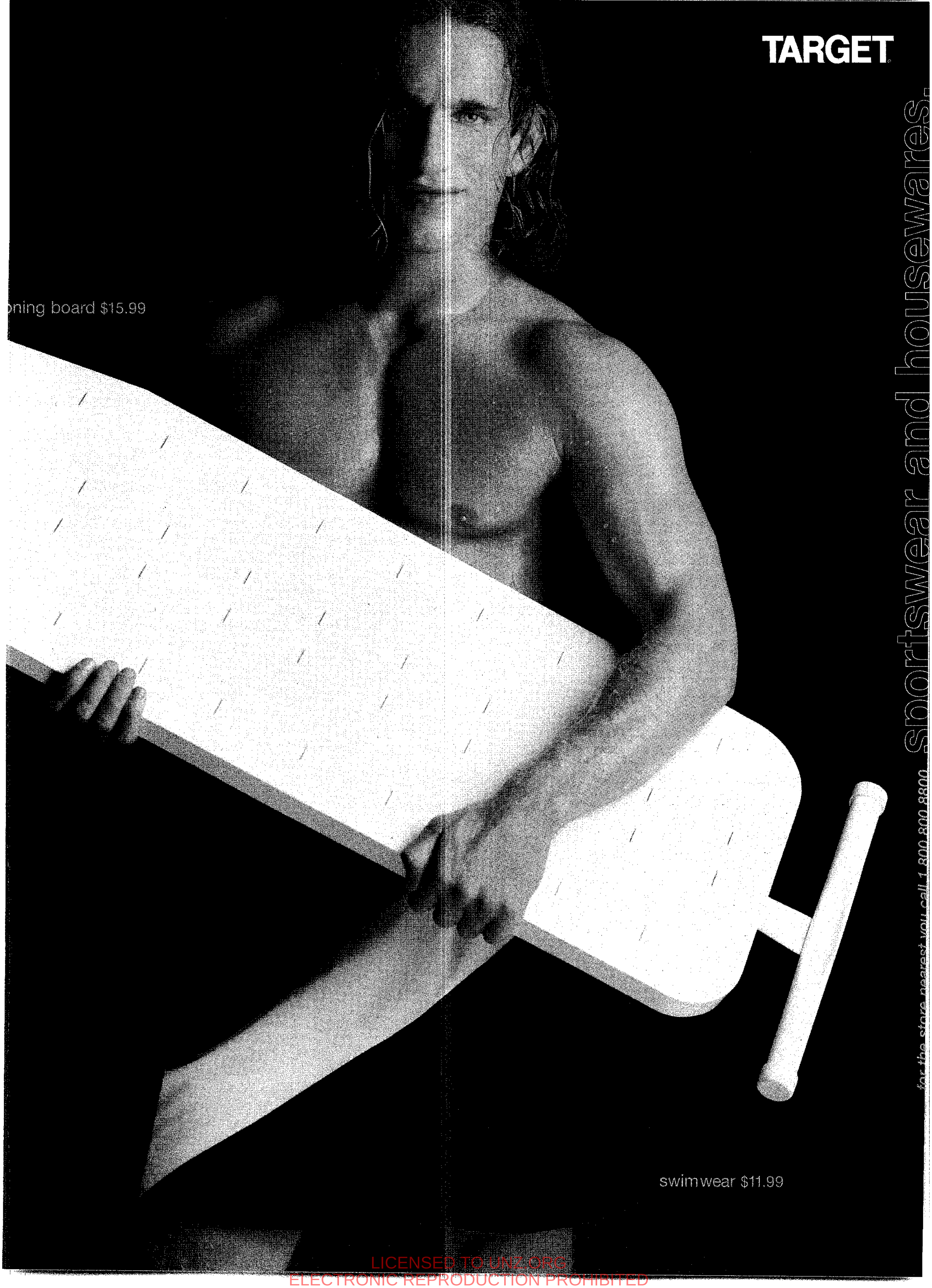
Garden Weddings

FOR A BARGAIN ON A WEDDING DRESS any day, the two-month-old Bridal Garden is the place to look. "Once-worn" dresses by designers like Scaasi, Amsale, Marisa, Carolina Herrera, Yumi Katsura, and Richard Glasgow are sold at well below half-price. *The Bridal Garden, 122 E. 29th St. (252-0661); A.E., M.C., V.; by appointment only.*

Eye Spy

CHELSEE EYES ALWAYS HAS A GREAT selection of designer eyewear, prescription lenses, and sunglasses (such good designers that we can't name them). Lightweight durable frames, retail $175–$400, here $95–$250; prescription "no-line" bifocal lenses, retail $175–$500, here $120–$270; sunglasses, 30 to 50 percent off retail. *Chelsee Eyes, 20 W. 20th St., Suite 804 (242-4823); checks accepted.; Mon.–Fri. 10–5, evenings and Sat. by appt.; 3/2–4/2.* ■

Photograph by Steve Wisbauer.

TARGET
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MOVIES DAVID DENBY

Mr. Holland's Other Opus

Director Todd Holland's 'Krippendorf's Tribe' lampoons academics, makes a fool of Richard Dreyfuss, and revels in a burlesque sensibility.

DR. JAMES KRIPPENDORF (RICHARD DREYFUSS), anthropologist and widower, layabout and fraud, a man possessed of three kids who don't respect him and a research grant that has long run out, is clearly at the end of his tether. Krippendorf has to deliver a report to his university. Where's his proof? That is, where's the documentary evidence of the previously undiscovered New Guinea tribe that he claims to have stumbled across with his late wife some years ago? The tribe, of course, doesn't exist. Professor Krippendorf bluffs his way through a lecture, concocting the tribal name—the Shelmikedmu (emphasis on the second syllable)—from the names of his three cranky children, Shelly, Mickey, and Edmund. Krippendorf then manufactures, in his suburban backyard, a film illustrating the curious habits of these remarkable people. Dressed in body paint and rings, with white wigs scrunched like sugar donuts about their ears, the Krippendorf children gambol among thatched huts with little pigs and other New Guinea creatures, and perform ritual circumcision—or so it seems—on the youngest boy. Krippendorf and his older son mix in some footage of an actual New Guinea tribe, and the academic audience is fooled. The director, Todd Holland, and the screenwriter, Charlie Peters (adapting a novel by Frank Parkin), don't bring this out, but it's implicit in the movie's entire scheme that the university types, despite their alleged high standards, take a voyeuristic, even pornographic, interest in aboriginal people. Excited by those shocking native customs, they can't see that the documentary is rubbish. A sycophantic female anthropologist (Jenna Elfman) gets drunk at Krippendorf's house, and the professor tricks her into wearing native garb; he then puts on tribal-chieftain rig himself and makes a film of the two of them exploring a great many more native customs.

Once it gets going, **Krippendorf's Tribe** is pretty damn funny—and at times uproarious—but there's no use pretending that the comedy is anything but disrespectful and crude. Thrown together without grace or beauty, *Krippendorf's Tribe* falls below the level of satire—it's burlesque, really, the kind of movie that might have been made in the thirties and forties, before Americans had been educated or bullied into respect for native people. As far as this movie is concerned, someone dressed with chicken bones sticking out of his nose is ridiculous, and that's that. The movie louses up native dress and ritual, body paint and phallus sheaths, and even anthropology in general, which is portrayed as a pretentious crock that could interest no one but phonies. Krippendorf's nemesis, the head of the department, Dr. Allen (Lily Tomlin), herself discovered a new tribe some twenty years ago and has been dining out on it ever since. She lives by vanity alone, and Tomlin, pale and enraged, makes her a creature of the most extreme paranoia.

New Guinea pigs: Dreyfuss's Professor Krippendorf and kids, faking the discovery of a lost tribe.

Photograph by Richard Foreman Jr./Buena Vista Pictures.

Todd Holland has worked as both a producer and a director on *The Larry Sanders Show,* and he has a TV veteran's rough-and-ready attitude toward comedy. The camera setups and the line readings are obvious and overemphatic, and Holland allows (or encourages) Jenna Elfman to come on so hard that we have trouble accepting her as a love interest for Richard Dreyfuss—she seems like a creep. The movie might actually have been funnier if it were a little closer to realism; if Holland were able, now and then, to rise above caricature. The university people are all portrayed as jerks; everyone is a jerk except Krippendorf's three little kids, who are struggling to grow up in the wake of their mother's death. The title has two meanings—the kids are also Krippendorf's tribe—and the movie suggests that this self-pitying widower had better discover *them* before it is too late.

Richard Dreyfuss has always possessed a talent for squashed dignity. Now 50, he seems sadder than before, more resigned. When he shows up at the university disguised as the Shelmikedmu tribal chief, wearing enough feathers, teeth, and whatnot to decorate the entire Banana Republic chain in 1983, he doesn't do much but grunt and slam the table, but he's funny anyway. He pours all of Krippendorf's wounded self-love into the chief's demand for respect. *Krippendorf's Tribe* is too casually made and too silly to take seriously, and yet too funny to ignore. When Dreyfuss and Elfman get interviewed together on TV—he as the chief, she as an anthropologist—the profanities emerge from beneath the pidgin New Guinea they speak to each other. The jokes are the kind of things we laughed at as children in old movies and in slapstick episodes of *I Love Lucy*. The picture represents a regression, I suppose, though there's something exhilarating about academic pieties falling to the floor like a tableful of old dishes.

In brief: Palmetto IS AN UNCONVINCING, PAINT-by-numbers pass at American *noir* by the usually ambitious German director Volker Schlondorff (*The Tin Drum*). The components of the disaster include Schlondorff's inability to get an adequate star performance out of an unfocused Woody Harrelson; his inducing Elisabeth Shue to caricature herself as a femme fatale who emits steam from every pore of her body; his arranging for characters to act stupidly in order to further the plot; and his attempt to excite the audience with such crudities as a vat of flesh-melting acid into which one character falls by accident. . . . Stupidity is also an issue in the independent film **The Real Blonde,** in which everyone seems to have suffered an IQ slippage of some 40 points. The writer-director Tom DiCillo had a great idea for a movie—a sexual roundelay set among young models and actors in New York. *The Real Blonde* undresses quite a few people, but the picture is so dully written and uncertainly directed that the audience is left wondering whether the stentorian clichés coming out of the characters' mouths are meant satirically or simply represent DiCillo's idea of how people talk. If the latter, why make a movie about such a collection of simps? The audience can't possibly enjoy the sight of Matthew Modine floundering around as a failed actor who doesn't seem to know what he wants to do with himself from one second to the next. In such a case, empathy gives way to irritation. The other victims of DiCillo's miscalculations include Catherine Keener, Daryl Hannah, Maxwell Caulfield, Bridgette Wilson, and, as a hypocritical loudmouth agent, a stridently unfunny Kathleen Turner. ▬

David Denby's 1998 reviews are available at **newyorkmag.com,** *along with movie news, a schedule of upcoming openings, and more.*

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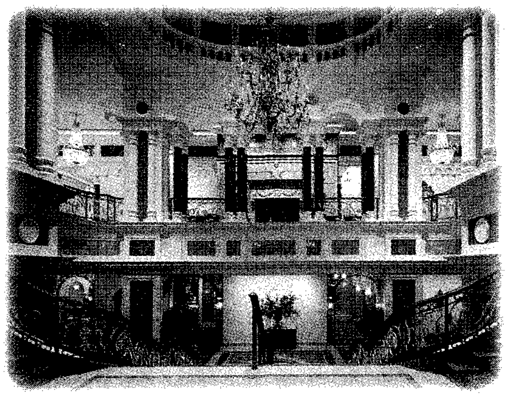

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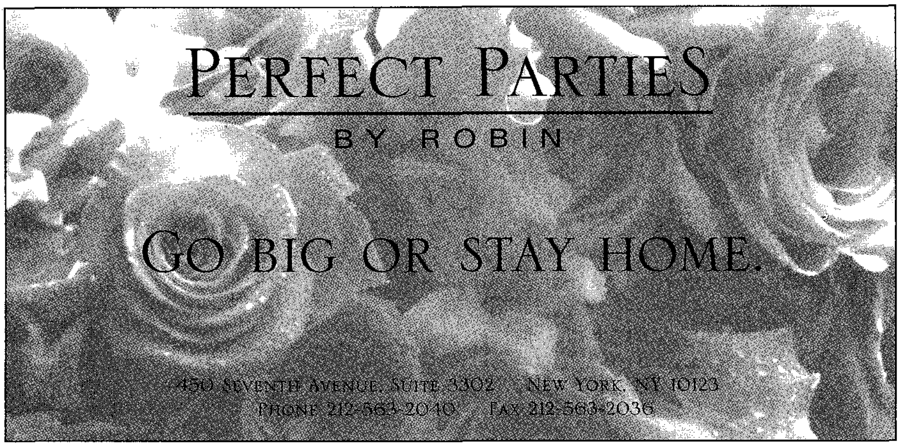

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BOOKS WALTER KIRN

She's Gotta Have It

In her strange new novel, 'Spending,' Mary Gordon has taken the themes of Jackie Collins and transposed them to the Upper West Side.

Spending
BY MARY GORDON
Scribner; 299 pages; $24

Great food, great art, great clothes, great sex: *Spending* is an empty nineties fairy tale.

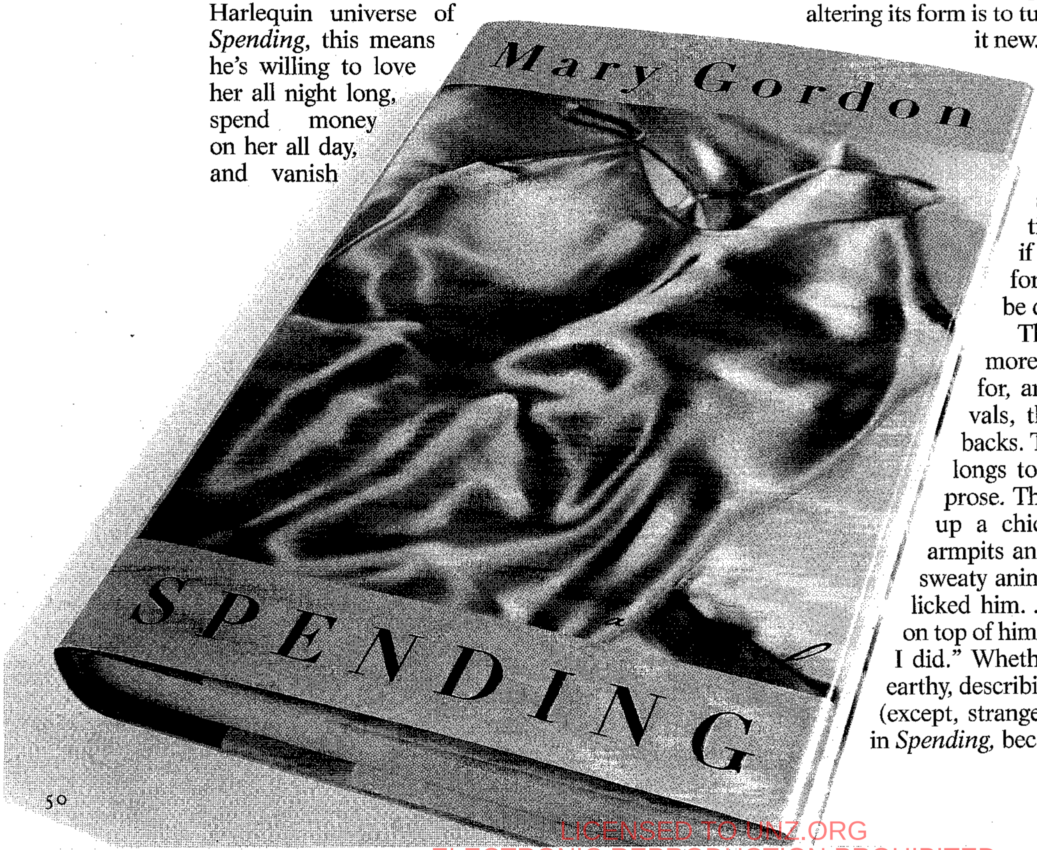
THE ONLY REAL CONFLICT IN MARY GORDON'S *Spending* is between having more and having much more. The book is a gratification fantasy, a novel about people who have everything—money, time, talent, position, love, and sex (particularly sex)—hooking up with others who have at least as much and making beautiful, soft-core music together on a variety of expensive bed sheets. Fabrics are very important in the book. The fluffiest cottons. The slipperiest satins. So are the right stores. Fish is purchased at Citarella, citrus fruit at Balducci's, cake at Greenberg's. As if they'd stepped out of a high-end print ad for scotch complete with one of those airy questionnaires outlining their tastes and temperaments (*Favorite Food: quail eggs; Motto: Only the Best*), Gordon's yuppie sensualists, examined close up, are really just human-shaped amalgamations of tiny, colored dots.

Unfortunately, *Spending* is not a satire but an earnest apology for the good life as defined by *Styles of the Times.* Its heroine is Monica Szabo, a feminist painter and summertime Cape Codder. She has a problem: Her life is good, not great. Enter B., a handsome, rich mystery man whose fondest desire is to be her "muse." In the haute Harlequin universe of *Spending*, this means he's willing to love her all night long, spend money on her all day, and vanish whenever she needs a little space. B. is the male equivalent of the sort of willing, servile females that brilliant male artists are granted as a birthright. As such, he loves Monica first for "her work" and only secondarily for her body. And B. has the classic male-bimbo career, to boot: He's a "trader." Or, as he boils it down for Monica, "... I make money and you make art."

Supposedly, these two activities are not as dissimilar as they seem. *Spending* has one of those simple, ironic, virtually diagrammable themes: The creative life and the material life, painting and trading, are mirrors of each other. Both require risk, discrimination, and a robust, unquenchable lust for life. This notion is not implied but baldly stated, and not somewhere near the end but on page one. "I must tell you, it was always about money.... Of course it was also about sex. And since I'm a painter and it affected my life and work, you'd have to say it was about art." That's just the sort of person Monica is: the kind who can talk of "art" and "life and work" without so much as a grin. One serious woman.

Who needs some serious loving, which B. provides. In this fable of sociosexual table-turning, B. is the passive erotic assistant. One minute he's posing for his artist mistress, flexing his biceps, the next he's down between her legs, flexing his cheeks. Is this any less a cliché because the genders are switched? No. That's not how originality works. To turn a thing upside down without essentially altering its form is to turn a thing upside down, not make it new. The politically conscious Monica feels like a revolutionary anyway. "If I'd rejected the madonna and the virgin, it was for something better, something self-invented, something that smashed icons and cast off old ties." For a moment, she wonders if she's become "a whore," but only for a moment. Her qualms exist to be dismissed, not investigated.

There's a lot of sex in *Spending,* more than most literary novels budget for, and it occurs at syncopated intervals, the way it does in trashy paperbacks. The style is frank and salty and belongs to the Julia Child school of erotic prose. The lovemaking sounds like cutting up a chicken. "I put my nose into his armpits and smelt his rank oniony smell. A sweaty animal. I loved the pelt. I sniffed and licked him.... He tasted vinegary. I climbed on top of him. There was nothing sweet in what I did." Whether the tone is lyrical, clinical, or earthy, describing sex is almost always a problem (except, strangely enough, in pornography), and in *Spending,* because there's so much sex, it's a big



Photograph by Steven Freeman.

problem. We're supposed to believe that Monica and B. are utterly on fire for each other, consumed by a passion most mortals only dream of, but what this comes down to is predictable: sex in the first-class cabin of a plane, sex in the studio, sex in the kitchen. The only faintly startling interlude comes when Monica, feeling disembodied after a wildly successful gallery show and a terrific review in the *Times,* makes B. pull over in his vintage muscle car so she can inhale his stinky pits and ground herself.

Though Gordon has a progressive sensibility (she throws a few shrill right-wing prudes into the story for her broad-minded heroes to gang up against), not since Ayn Rand have the supersexy elite been so shamelessly celebrated. When Monica's not having sex, she's making art: a groundbreaking series of crucifixion paintings portraying Jesus as "post-orgasmic," not dead. Here, the writing is scholarly and thoughtful, offering a lofty counterpoint to the down-and-dirty rutting. We overhear Monica's musings as she museum-hops. We travel to Rome with her and view the ruins. But what can only be a question of taste—Monica's importance as an artist—is presented by Gordon as a matter of fact. The only character who dares to challenge the genius of Monica's rather sophomoric iconoclasm is a frumpy ex-nun who's clearly not getting any, which—in *Spending*'s self-satisfied scheme of things—gives her no right to judge someone who is.

Photograph by Joyce Ravid/Outline.

Spending is beach reading for people with private beaches, but its upscale romantic silliness and excursions into gourmet porn aren't what make it bad. What's repulsive is its clubbiness. For a book about daredevil intellectuals, its cultural range is incredibly narrow—about the distance from West End Avenue to Central Park West. *The Charlie Rose Show* (the setting for Monica's showdown with her Roman Catholic critics) might as well be the Lyceum. It needs no introduction, and it gets none. Monica's brand of art, her preferences in food, museums, linens, and ideas, are presented as existential fundamentals. Not to want them is to be spiritually numb. As for the money to buy life's fineries, it floats down, nineties-style, from above—the fruit of a surprise inheritance or a lucky commodities trade. This is all meant to be reverse subversive: a guiltless, liberating celebration of market-driven, *Zagat*-certified, have-your-ideals-and-eat-them-too Clinton-era epicureanism. It's as if Gordon feels the affluent urban herd needs some formal literary permission to enjoy the rich banquet it's enjoying already. *Spending* is her way of saying *Go for it!*

SHORTS

HUGH GALLAGHER WAS PUBLISHED IN *Harper's,* introduced to Jann Wenner by John F. Kennedy Jr., and signed by ICM all before he was 20, which doesn't exactly square with the struggling-writer angst that drives his first novel, **Teeth** (Pocket Books; $22).

Although *Teeth*'s writer character Neil can't afford his dentist bills, he's got the enlarged ego, the scorn for glossies, and the paranoid competitiveness of some of the real-life young bucks currently charging their way, antlers sharpened, through the magazine world. *Teeth* is laced with pop-culture *clefs*—Chockapolacka (Lollapalooza); a young, ex-alcoholic actress named Gertie (Drew Barrymore, of course)—as well as some familiar media types. The novel falls short of adult satire, and the scenes in the dental chair go on way too long, but it's sort of nice to know that a writer can be so bitter when he's only 25.

RUTH G. DAVIS

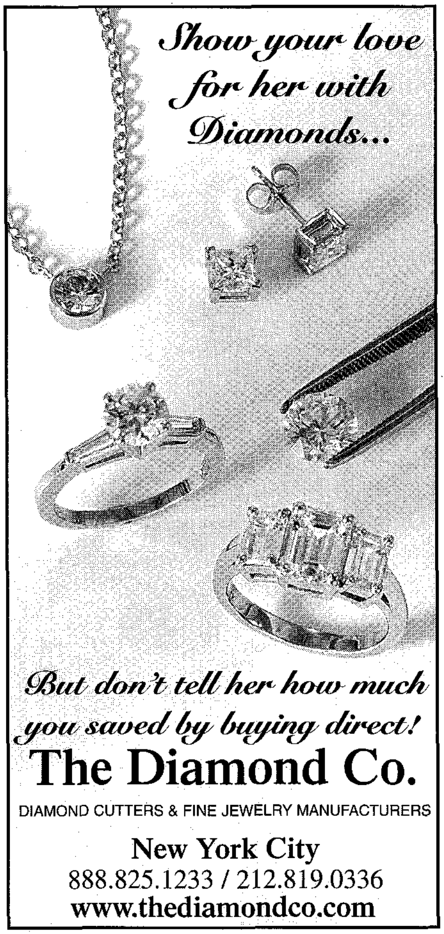
HERE IS A MIDLIFE-CRISIS NOVEL WHOSE protagonist doesn't sleep with someone his daughter's age, join a gym, or price a sports car. Doug Willis, the disaffected P.R. man and nominal hero of David Gates's **Preston Falls** (Knopf; $25), uses vintage guitars and a pickup truck to hide the fact that he's long past his dreams.

The book is written like a series of interior monologues, and Gates gets the sometimes banal, sometimes profane voice exactly right: Willis reveals nothing of himself to himself, except a penchant for terrible jokes. It takes us a few days in the mind of his wife, Jean, to begin to understand his actions. But when she leaves him to his own devices, he finds the hillbilly locals far from the idealized men of action he hoped to emulate. What's most disturbing, and most interesting, is that no one involved thinks getting back together is the answer. Willis and Jean are more concerned that they can't feel anything about each other at all.

ALEXANDRA LANGE

FROM OUR CONTRIBUTORS

New books from *New York* writers: Peter G. Davis's *The American Opera Singer* (Doubleday; $40), James Kaplan's *Two Guys From Verona* (The Atlantic Monthly Press; $25), and Luc Sante's *The Factory of Facts* (Pantheon; $24).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THEATER JOHN SIMON

Schmucks and Queens

‘Mizlansky/Zilinsky’ is a fun and frisky ride over a lot of potholes; ‘The Beauty Queen of Leenane’ is not really a beauty (but neither is the play).

Silver standard: Geoffrey Nauffts, Christopher C. Fuller, Joanna Going, and Patricia Clarkson in *The Maiden’s Prayer.*

JON ROBIN BAITZ’S **Mizlansky/Zilinsky or “schmucks”** IS as curious as its title. It is the full-length expansion of a 1984 one-acter, and it feels like patchwork: Is it possible that the additions were not new scenes but bits squeezed into the interstices here and there? For the play alternates between passages of dramatic alertness and periods of dozing off. In which case, one wonders, when was the playwright asleep, back in 1984 or now?

Davis Mizlansky and Sam Zilinsky co-produced sleazy little movies in the good, or bad, old days. At this point, the IRS is investigating some of their past machinations. The more sophisticated Zilinsky, now an ex-partner living in New York, is ready, in exchange for immunity, to spill the beans, to the chagrin of Mizlansky, who holds the beleaguered fort in L.A. Meanwhile, there are two projects on the agenda. First, tapes of biblical tales, such as *The Real Story of Sodom and Gomorrah,* for Kmart marketing. This one interests a consortium of Oklahoma businessmen, for whom the dentist Horton De Vries is negotiating. Next, a script about Nazi war criminals hiding in the U.S.A., to be written by the slippery Alan Tolkin and starred in by the slipping Lionel Hart, formerly of the TV series *Tintoretto, Art Detective.*

When De Vries is sounded out on the Nazi subject, he asks for “a more balanced approach” to it than is customary: Our cowboy-booted dentist partakes of the jack-booted Nazi mentality. The Jewish Mizlansky and Tolkin are hardly fazed by this; the Jewish Zilinsky and Hart react angrily. Meanwhile, young Paul Trecker, Mizlansky’s writer, story editor, and factotum (the playwright’s presumptive alter ego), observes and tries to maintain his sanity as Mizlansky keeps sending him out for just the right can of tuna—no other brand will do. Besides Zilinsky we also get Miles Brook, the sweaty-under-the-collar lawyer, and, later, Dusty Fink, the New Age masseuse. (Baitz is good with names.) On the phone, we hear aural cameos from Mrs. Z. (Christine Baranski) and the ex–Mrs. M. (Julie Kavner).

It is well known that good satire is written with some ambivalence: a sense of shared guilt, co-conspiratorial amusement, even grudging admiration. Baitz certainly exhibits something like this, and all his characters have moments of horrific magnificence. His one-liners are as good as they come: “You have to have a particular nature to be a whore: chronic underachievers with the complexion of nonstop masturbators.” Or: “White-collar prisons, where politicians write books, are born again, and rape you.” A person pleading insufficient biblical knowledge—“I took ‘The Bible as Literature’ at Brandeis”—is reproved with “You’re overqualified.” Or: “Can I ask you a special question: Are you just a little bit gay?” But all this Hollywood stuff is a tired, if not exhausted, subject; yet a new angle is hard to come by. Baitz does well, but only a miracle would do.

Nathan Lane is better as a light-in-the-loafers comic than as a dog-eat-dog heavy, but his Mizlansky manages some wonderfully incredulous looks, deeply injured silences, and majestic throwaway lines, e.g., “You’re like some kind of Park Avenue Jewish Wasp.” His former cohort and current nemesis, Zilinsky, who wears green suede slip-ons bought in Tokyo, is grandly embodied by Lewis J. Stadlen. When these two have at each other, there are more sparks than from an old locomotive cleaving the night. There is fun when former M/Z hits like *Hitler’s Niece, Sidewinder Summer,* and *LSD Mama Detective* are recalled, but there is also all that familiar smog that Mizlansky’s hilltop Xanadu looks down on: too much déjà in that view.

Fine supporting performances by Lee Wilkof, Larry Pine, Glenn Fitzgerald, Mark Blum, and Jennifer Albano help, although Paul Sands’s movie and TV star is too eccentric by two thirds. Joe Mantello has directed cannily, but the real heroes are the designers: Ann Roth, with costumes that provide Proustian character analysis; Brian MacDevitt, who does with lights what the Impressionists did with brushes; and Santo Loquasto,

Photograph by Susan Johann.

whose sets are marvels in themselves and in their lightning changes: the true objective correlatives of the author's ideas.

LITTLE CAN BE SAID FOR NICKY SILVER'S **The Maiden's Prayer,** whose very title staunchly resists interpretation. This is the kind of piece concocted by someone who has nothing to say and insists on saying it; but there is a vast difference between keeping a hand in and putting one's foot in it. It is about three men and two women—or three heterosexuals and two homosexuals—who keep getting into or out of one another's hair, creating humorless havoc and preposterous resolutions.

If there were real people in a real story here, believe me, I'd gladly give it away, because there is nothing else to tell about and because I'd happily repay the author for two of the worst hours of my playgoing life. Even the excellent Derek McLane's décor is a disaster, and Evan Yionoulis directs the actors to churn up a vacuum. Christopher C. Fuller does even less with his role than is there; Patricia Clarkson, Geoffrey Nauffts, Daniel Jenkins, and the enchanting Joanna Going thrash about valiantly to scarcely less scant effect.

THE FIRST PLAY BY THE WILDLY SUCCESSFUL young Irish playwright Martin McDonagh to reach us is **The Beauty Queen of Leenane,** and it disappoints. The authentically Irish cast—Anna Manahan, Marie Mullen, Brían F. O'Byrne, and Tom Murphy—three of them from the original production, could not be better. Neither could the original director, Garry Hynes, of Galway's Druid Theater. But the play, despite traces of talent, is lopsided: a hybrid that cannot command full credence or compassion from its viewers. Its being part of a trilogy is no excuse.

Granted, blending farce and melodrama is no easy matter. It harks back to O'Casey, who himself had problems with it. We can believe the hate-filled symbiosis of 40-year-old Maureen, the desperate spinster, and her mean-spirited mother, Mag, who doesn't want to go into a home. But that in tiny Leenane, where everybody knows everybody, Pato Dooley and Maureen should not have found each other in twenty years is hard to swallow. So, too, is the Hardyesque device of the fatally undelivered letter, and its speciously contrived causes and consequences. And even if the now-sane Maureen had a breakdown fifteen years ago, would she still be hallucinating?

What truly doesn't work is the mechanistic manipulation of our feelings; improbability paradoxically combined with predictability. It is, moreover, hard to care about benighted people, who can pass muster in farce, when the play veers into would-be tragedy. To the prolific McDonagh: better luck next time. ■

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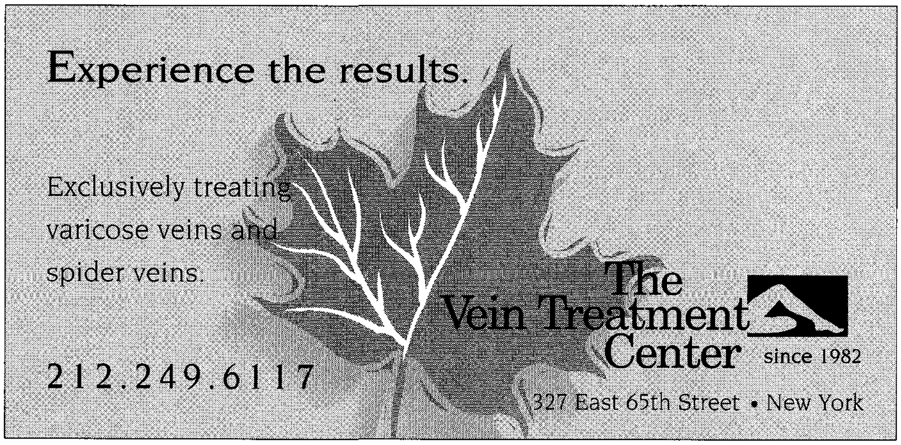
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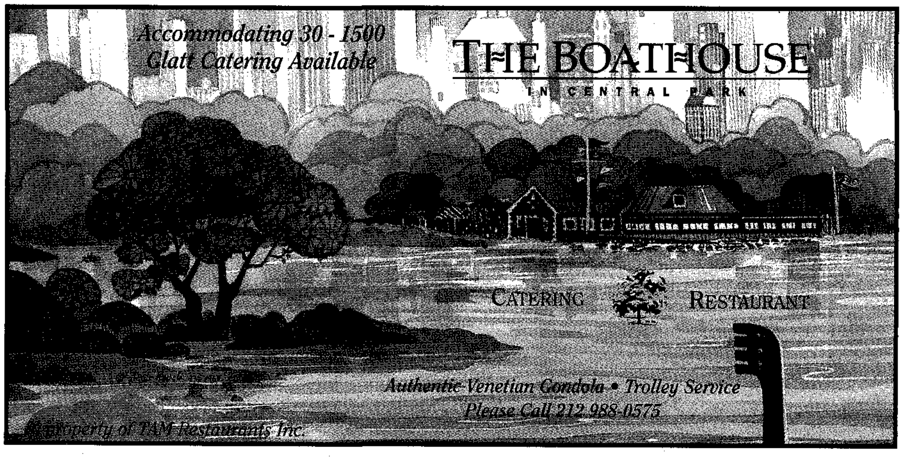
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ART MARK STEVENS

Machine Dreams

At MoMA, two painters from opposite ends of the century, Fernand Léger and Chuck Close, and their meditations on the mechanical.

TO MANY ROMANTICS, "THE MACHINE" IS A DEATHly idea—sterile, mechanistic, dehumanizing. Yet it inspires more warm-blooded art in the twentieth century than, say, that charming old has-been the moon. The Museum of Modern Art is now presenting the work of two artists, **Fernand Léger** and **Chuck Close,** each of whom transforms the powerful aura of the machine into a lively meditation on modern existence. If you wish to remain attuned to the moment, believing with Baudelaire that a modern artist should address his own time, then you'll relish the conjunction of two such exhibitions drawn from opposite ends of a century. Even Léger's less successful work is illuminating, providing an ironic warning about what happens when the artist himself becomes too like a machine.

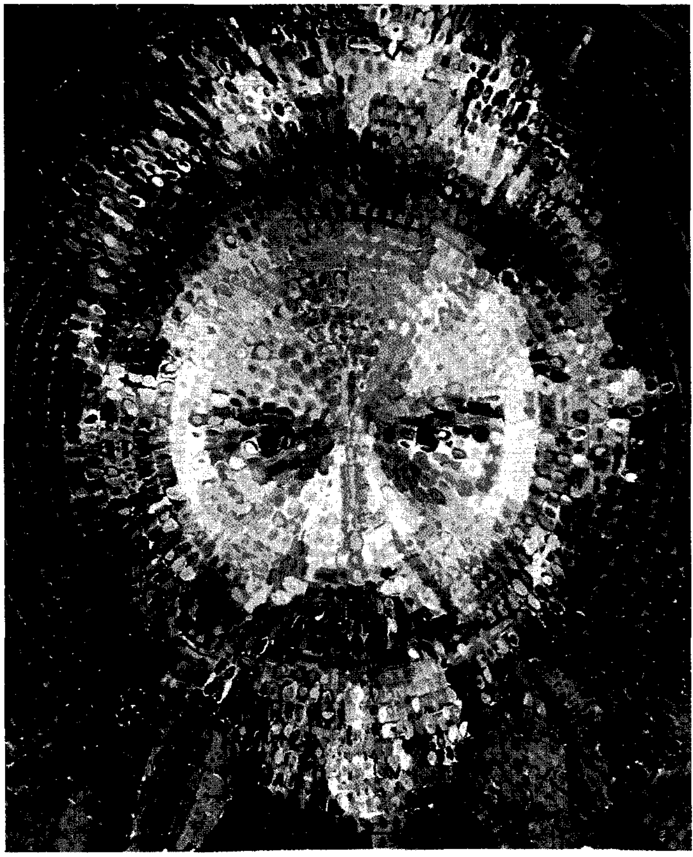

Photo-op art: Chuck Close's *Lucas II* (1987).

Photograph by Bill Jacobson, courtesy of PaceWildenstein Gallery.

The curators of the Léger exhibit, which opened in Paris and was organized for MOMA by Carolyn Lanchner, make a revisionist argument: that Léger's sensibility is more complex than the usual portrayal of him as a cubist spokesman for the modern machine. Perhaps—but the paintings also support the traditional emphasis. Léger (1881–1955) matters mainly because of what's in the marvelous opening rooms of this exhibition. He begins as a serious cubist, and a deft cubist he is, at once careful and painterly. Then he brilliantly shifts the key of the style. Although Picasso and Braque brought popular culture into cubism, there remains something ironic, playful, and aphoristic in their approach. They are provocative wits who do not stray far from the Parisian café. Léger muscles cubism from the café into the street. That air of reason reflected in the grid—which in cubism appears philosophical, a deduction reminiscent of Descartes—is now employed to capture the dazzling mechanics of modern life. Léger creates forms that look brawny rather than refined; he seems to construct his art with girders, emphasizing primary colors that evoke the shout of the new advertising. He embraces everything new, so long as it does not shrink from the hammering pulse of the young century. His great *La Ville* ("The City"), painted in 1919, anticipates much later art—including American Pop. More important, the picture is a rhapsodic vision of the twentieth-century city. Lights blink and shimmer, pedestrians hurry past, girders claim the sky. The city is not only a great spectacle. It seems a fresh form of life.

Léger had little time for art's private sphere. Not only should artists collaborate, he thought, bringing various voices together, but the different arts should also draw close. (The new world did not require navel-gazers or lonely romantics.) Léger's encompassing vision led him to many collaborations, from creating stage sets to making movies; the curators present some of this work on a lower floor at the museum, including the film *Ballet mécanique,* which whimsically fuses the human and the mechanical. Léger's collaborations and paintings through the twenties create a powerful vision of a society working together to claim a visionary future—a society where the machine is not tamed or made "human" in some trivial sense but instead creates the possibility of soaring splendor. Not surprisingly, Léger revered New York City—"the most beautiful spectacle in the world."

The history of the twentieth century is not kind to optimists. Perhaps a vision like Léger's could have withstood one world war, but not the subsequent Depression, the rise of totalitarian politics, and the careening toward a second world war. Léger tries to retain the gist of his early vision, but the price of his failure to confront the evolving truth of his time is a hardening of his art. His ideas become a kind of machine—an ideology. His forms, too, become more mechanical—a decoration. He takes on new subjects, and his view darkens somewhat, but the paintings themselves appear increasingly hollow, their feeling more official than earned. Paradoxically, Léger's intoxication with the new begins to look old and naïve. The retrospective of Chuck Close's art, which Robert Storr has organized for MOMA, can provide a more subtle and contemporary view of our relationship to the mechanical. Here, the shadow of the machine comes not from pistons and brawn but from an air of unsentimental process and calculation—and an edgy relationship to the constant pound, pound, pound of advertising.

Chuck Close began making his characteristic billboard-size portraits in the late sixties, a time of strong contrasts in the art world. On the one hand, young artists responded to the rebellious spirit of that era and revered the idea of the hard-drinking Pollock, famously portrayed in *Life* magazine as a tough outsider with a cigarette hanging from his lip. On the other, they investigated the least romantic aspects of art, laying bare the physical process behind art-making, the brute facts of the materials, and the theoretical foundations of the work.

In his black-and-white portraits from the late sixties, Close, who is now 57 years old, brought these contrasting moods together. His famous *Big Self-Portrait* of 1967–68—which depicts an unshaven, in-your-face rebel with a cigarette in his mouth—is a picture of an antihero in the Pollock mode; his other subjects, drawn from a circle of sixties friends, also have a cocky air. At the same time, he approached the portraits in the most circumscribed and mechanical way, turning his subjects into objects. He would first take a photograph of a friend, usually as flat and dead-on as a passport picture. After drawing a grid on a canvas, he would begin spray-painting the portrait onto the grid, methodically transferring the image from the photograph to the canvas square by square, rather like a billboard painter. A picture could take more than a year to complete. In the early days, Close tried to give his marks on the canvas no expressive quality whatsoever.

The resulting portraits are frank but also elusive: They have a tremble, both visual and existential, that belies their cold-blooded creation. A picture from 1975–76 called *Linda* delivers a Pop smack yet is neither sterile nor mechanically stiff; it does not pin down the eye the way a poster will. It may evoke the giant faces on billboards or in the movie theaters, but it has no commercial slickness. There is a

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constant flicker, a back-and-forth shimmer, between the hand and the mechanical means. (The hand is never quite as inexpressive as the artist might wish.) The very idea of the image seems to issue from some fraught space between painting and photography. While a Close portrait may offer a fierce close-up of a face—including individual pores and stray whiskers—it is also reticent. It refuses to convey too much psychological insight into the person before us. This creates an extraordinary sensation typical of a narcissistic culture: We know these people intimately and not at all.

In the late seventies, Close, who loves beautiful brushwork, began to free his hand. He continued to lay out grids on large canvases, painstakingly transferring the image from a photograph to a canvas, but he loosened the tight stitch. In one series, he filled the spaces with finger painting; he would create a massive face from thousands upon thousands of delicate fingerprints. In another series, he filled the grid with bits of pulp paper. The more Close emphasized his own touch, the more subtle and varied the light became in his portraits until he was no longer just copying a photograph but becoming a gestural painter, standing back and responding with increasing spontaneity to the evolving image. In 1988, a blood vessel in Close's spinal column ruptured, partially paralyzing him. Many people believe his late work derives from his physical problems. Not so. The difficulty of handling the brush may have further loosened his touch, but his push in that direction was clear before the rupture. In one of his best pictures, *Kiki*, from 1993, he builds a face by making thousands of tiny paintings in the spaces of the grid.

Today, the photograph dominates—even tyrannizes—the human face. In Close's portraits, the mechanical power of the camera is unsentimentally acknowledged. But he does not rest with this obvious fact: The authority of his art stems from the hand's complex and varied relationship to the machine. A photograph of a face is a given that Close, for one, cannot accept as a lasting truth. He must remake the photograph by hand, repossessing the human image in his early work with great reticence and then, later, with bravado. Against the fast click of the camera, he insists upon the slow time it takes to construct a face. We are always aware that even so, we cannot finally know these people; we must look at them through the powerful filters of process and artfulness. In the end, Close, whether intentionally or not, does what most important portrait painters do: He upholds the mystery of the flesh. He does not yield to those with a more mechanical view of what it means to be human. ■

CLASSICAL MUSIC PETER G. DAVIS

The Neutral Tone

Riccardo Chailly, the maestro of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, can't quite conduct the same heat his predecessors did.

Riccardo Chailly: Small of sound.

CONDUCTORS AREN'T GODS ANYMORE, AND ALL orchestras sound pretty much alike. Does one phenomenon have anything to do with the other? The depressing thought that it might occurred to me more than once while listening to three concerts played in Avery Fisher Hall not long ago by the **Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra** of Amsterdam under the direction of its principal conductor, Riccardo Chailly. When I was a music student in New York back in the sixties, the Concertgebouw's visits to Carnegie Hall were always eagerly anticipated, and most of us could sit blindfolded and identify this orchestra from its unique sonic character, a deep-centered, perfectly blended, old-mahogany-rich sound that seemed to permeate the entire ensemble from the top notes of the piccolo down to the low C of the double bass. We first got to know the Concertgebouw's inimitable musical persona from old recordings by Willem Mengelberg and Eduard Van Beinum, and it was good to hear Bernard Haitink developing fresh interpretations within the same glowing instrumental context.

Chailly has been in charge of the Concertgebouw since 1988—time enough to stamp his ideas on the orchestra—but even after a decade, his musical character remains strangely elusive and lacking any special definition. But then, Chailly shares that sense of anonymity with most of the conductors of his generation, aged 45 to 60, musicians who have inherited the great orchestras of the world from their larger-than-life predecessors but project distinctly small personalities in comparison. More than that, the Concertgebouw no longer sounds the same, and the sort of impersonal, could-be-from-anywhere sound that the orchestra now cultivates no doubt reflects its Italian-born music director's own cosmopolitan background. Worse, the ensemble has loosened a great deal in matters of attack, chording, and instrumental blend, although that might have been due to the vagaries of the moment, unfamiliar hall acoustics, jet lag, or whatever. I probably should point out that a colleague from the *Times* praised the orchestra for exhibiting precisely the technical virtuosity and precision that I found lacking—different ears hear different things, but I would have thought that such problems as sloppy entries, uncertain rhythmic pulse, and sour intonation were not subjective issues.

The Concertgebouw's recent London/Decca recordings under Chailly, not surprisingly, have a more handsome veneer, even if the interpretations still sound very objective and nonspecific. In that respect, I took away more from the orchestra's performance of the Mahler Fifth Symphony as heard at home over a CD player. Some might even find a certain merit to Chailly's dry-eyed, coolly efficient reading—if one wants, or needs, a respite from Bernstein's overwhelming tragic vision or Karajan's magisterial Olympian thunder. Without recorded Concertgebouw comparisons on hand, I could only wonder why the accompaniments to Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto and the Berg Violin Concerto sounded so vague and characterless, although some compensations were to be had from Arcadi Volodos's infallible fingers in the former and Frank Peter Zimmermann's poetic tracing of the solo line in the latter.

Perhaps the most enjoyable performance of the three evenings was Rossini's *Stabat Mater.* This eloquent bel canto setting of the old liturgical Latin hymn hardly depends on the imposing instrumental forces of the Concertgebouw for its effect, but the solo vocal quartet was choice—Barbara Frittoli, Sonia Ganassi, Stuart Neill, and Michele Pertusi—and Chailly for once seemed genuinely engaged by a score that obviously puts him closely in touch with his musical roots.

THE NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC'S **American Classics Project,** launched last year with a brief overview of the country's symphonic tradition, continues this season with a look at vocal compositions and shorter orchestral works. Given the Philharmonic's many other responsibilities,

Photographs by Stephanie Berger.

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the orchestra's initiative in this area is necessarily modest, and, considering how much music there is to choose from, bound to be disappointingly restrictive to those who treasure this repertory. Still, it's better than nothing, and during one week in February at least there was plenty of activity: a concert of all-American vocal chamber music in Merkin Hall; a program of choral music sung by Joseph Flummerfelt's Westminster Choir; a master class in American song with soprano Dawn Upshaw; and the Philharmonic's four regular subscription concerts, featuring performances of Lukas Foss's *Time Cycle* with Upshaw as soloist.

It was especially salutary to encounter *Time Cycle* once again—at its world premiere, given by the Philharmonic in 1960 with soprano Adele Addison, Leonard Bernstein was so impressed by the piece that he conducted a repeat performance for anyone who cared to stay and hear. Audiences at the time who had followed Foss through his earlier stages as a wunderkind composer of Coplandesque Americana and into his various "neo" phases (Romantic, Classical, Baroque) must have been unsettled to hear this flirtation with serial procedures, a mere prelude to the even more dramatically experimental music to come. Yes, Foss has tried out nearly every technique available to a twentieth-century composer, but he practices each with enthusiasm and inventive fantasy, and *Time Cycle* remains one of his most compelling scores. The texts consist of four poems dealing with passing time—by Auden, Housman, Kafka, and Nietzsche—and the music's various intricate, rhythmic ticking patterns are just as hypnotic as the time-stopped lyricism of the finale ("O Mensch, gib Acht!") as it topples into a Mahlerian eternity.

Upshaw gave an expressive and intent reading of the piece—and I write *reading* advisedly, since her eyes were glued to the score from first note to last. That considerably undercut the effect of her interpretation compared to an enchantingly immediate rendition of Canteloube's *Songs of the Auvergne,* five songs that she sang from memory after intermission. I also regret that Kurt Masur elected to omit the three improvisatory sections from the Foss, passages that can be heard on the recently reissued Bernstein/Addison recording (Sony SMK 63164). For the rest of the program, Masur kept the time imagery before us with a performance of Haydn's *Clock Symphony,* with its charming tick-tock andante movement. Prokofiev's raw and raunchy *Scythian Suite* made an earsplitting finale, although the suggestion that its sunrise conclusion played neatly into the time-cycle theme of the concert definitely seemed like a good point stretched too far. ■

RESTAURANTS **HAL RUBENSTEIN**

Morocco-co

L'Orange Bleue takes liberties with Moroccan cuisine, but it's not worth being a stickler when the food's this fun; minimalist Mono pulls out some surprises.

"IS THIS REALLY MOROCCAN FOOD?" SAYS THE Prada-fied damsel with worldly skepticism as she is ushered to her table at **L'Orange Bleue.** "I mean, like truly?" Baby, you couldn't *handle* the truth.

"You don't know how to eat pigeon pie, do you?" said an elegant Moroccan matriarch ten years ago to four pinky-up Le Cirque–for–lunch grandes dames at her table at Malcolm Forbes's multi-tented 70th-birthday banquet in Tangiers. "I will show you." With that, she pulled the huge, pie-laden platter toward her, thrust her palm forward, and scooped up a slice. "You shove one hand under and lift, like so. You break a piece off with the other hand, like so. And then you smack it in your mouth!" she said with a resounding pop. One of the dames asked another to accompany her to the ladies' room. She looked faint. "You Americans," the Moroccan woman laughed, handing me a slice, "have such a thing about cutlery. You think God gave you fingers only for nail polish."

Remember, we're the ones who insisted on dividing the dinner plate into three sections. Who went to Nagano and couldn't believe that the Japanese are more likely to eat doughy balls of adzuki beans than sashimi. Who think organ meat is ooky. Considering our cultural idiosyncrasies, why do we make such a big deal about the authenticity of the restaurants we go to here? Our produce is different. So is our water, our utensils, and our comfort level. Instead of looking for Bedouins in the kitchen, we ought to be more concerned with whether our food tastes good and if we're having a good time.

Once you get accustomed to the orange lacquer walls (indirect lighting tempers them more flatteringly than you'd think possible) and Third World R&B tapes (they're not that loud), L'Orange Bleue is almost as seductive as Malcolm's tents and easily as cozy as owners Vincent Boitier and Pierre Casaux's former place of employ, Restaurant Provence. But neither man can claim to be Moroccan. Does that make their fare fraudulent? No more than the menu's inclusion of Roquefort, red snapper, puttanesca, and Argentine shell steak.

Aw, c'mon. Are boundaries that important when the puttanesca is really sharp and bracing, the Roquefort goes so nicely with oranges and rosewatered romaine, and the fragrantly seared snapper is enhanced by mustard greens and a balmy fig-balsamic sauce?

The best appetizers are fresh and uncomplicated. There is a trio of soothing salmon tartare, smoked mackerel, and full-bodied crab cake all soothed by truffle oil. Mussels maintain dominance in a pungent bath of fennel and curry. A gentle soupe de poisson offers a double bonus of rouille and Gruyère. And two salads—one of beets, goat cheese, and olive tapénade, the other with apples, endives, Gruyère, and walnuts—excel with well-balanced contrasting sensations. Though pleasant, a pestoed vegetable soup is stuck on one note; the linguini with pesto is so satisfying as to render the unyielding calamari annoying. Flick 'em out.

In addition to the snapper, desirable entrées include a tenderly sweet baby chicken spiked with lemon confit, a brighter, meatier lamb tagine than you'll ever enjoy in Tangier, and baubles of codfish almost overshadowed by delicious roast beets and chermoulla. Lamb chops are tasty, but the cut isn't good enough for this side of the Atlantic; the steak is fine (but why?); and a dynamic fish du jour is needed to match the shower of Moroccan spices it gets grilled under.

So what's your favorite North African dessert, hotshot? Dying for fromage blanc or figs? Go for it. Give me L'Orange Bleue's apple tart and chocolate mousse. Look, when a Japanese speed skater was asked what American food he liked best, he screamed, "Denny's!" Can you relate? Then have the tart, with a scoop of vanilla, and relax.

L'Orange Bleue, 430 Broome Street (226-4999).

Photographs by Steven Freeman.

Triple treat: From left, the chicken tagine, the fettucine puttanesca, and the mussels in curry.

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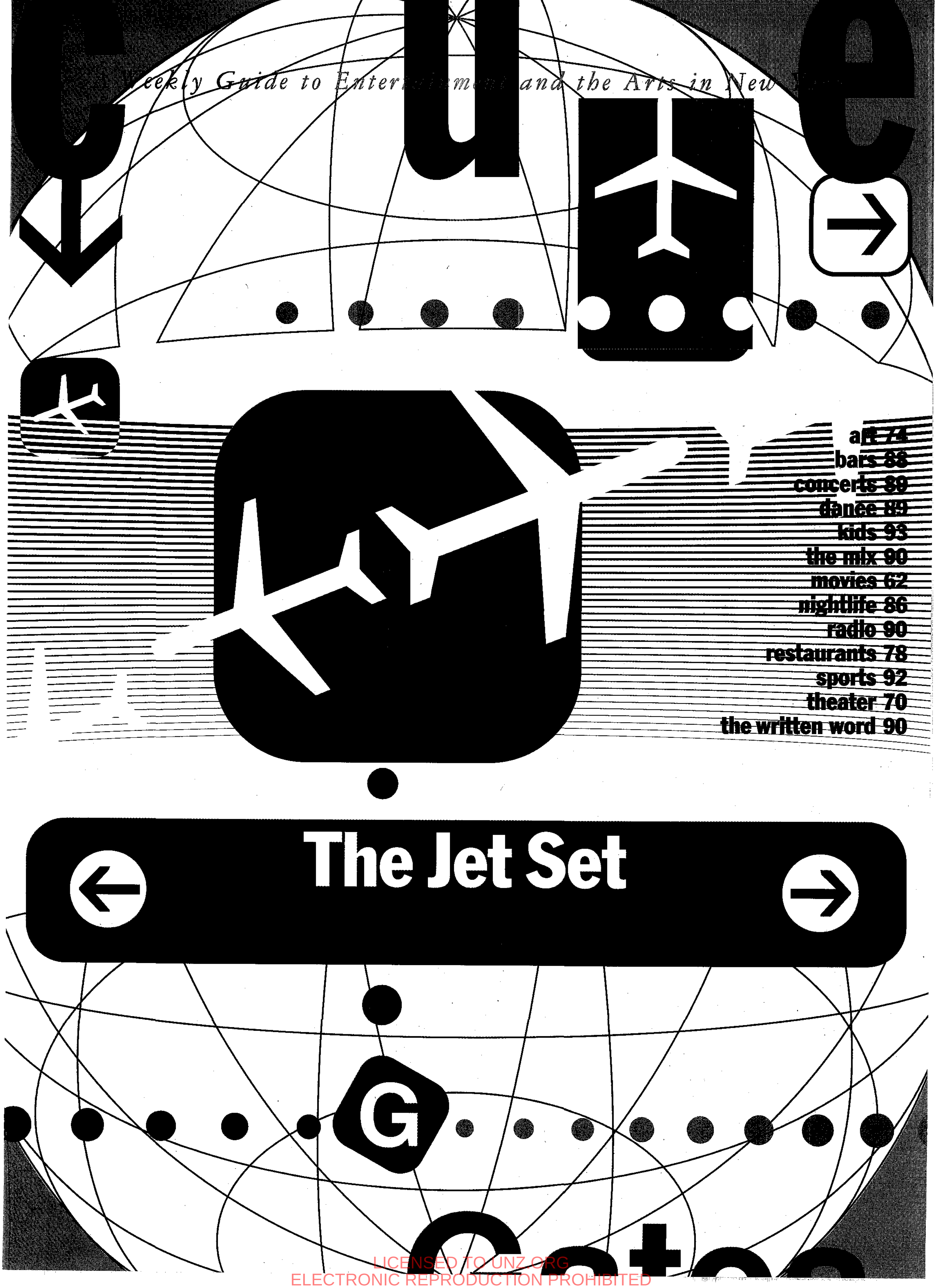
IT'S UNNERVING TO WALK INTO THE RESTAURANT once called the Black Sheep, for exactly the opposite reason it used to be. Known currently as **Mono,** this blank slate of a room, with its barely appointed minimalism, is neither warm nor dramatic. It's as if once all the precious Hallmark trappings of the space's former occupant were removed, the management couldn't bear to clutter up the joint again.

You're in for a delightful surprise, though it might be fun if the restaurant did something to create a sense of anticipation. Wouldn't it be nice to sit there expecting something like a luscious foie gras and apple terrine drizzled in a port sauce, a tuna tartare with enough ginger to snap you to attention, or a captivating ginger-zapped fish-based vegetable soup that doesn't even need its rock shrimp studding? To have a hunch that a little saffron bewitchery would be wafting up from the fennel-and-leek broth with each opened mussel?

It's confusing how piquant slices of duck don't match their adjacent salad, while portobellos come with companionably spunky greens, but I'd happily face a bare brick wall if I knew another tower of balsamic-glazed chicken livers with a potato-and-liver mousse was heading my way. Chilean sea bass with fennel and celery doused in tomato peppers deserves its own bouquet. Hearty, braised beef abetted by white beans warrants some deep mahogany paneling, and carefully roasted monkfish brightened by thyme, bacon, and caramelized onions is worthy of a view of the ocean. Even simple dishes like lamb chops with lean slices of loin and an organic roast chicken radiate unforeseen character. And dense, mushroomy chicken casserole is nothing like the back-of-the-box recipes your mom made.

Furthermore, what a treat to stumble across a kitchen that appreciates the thrill of dessert; that is playful enough to suggest a pungent tarte tatin with papaya and mango; that takes the yawn out of crème brûlée with carnival squash; or that delivers a pecan tart that deliciously spotlights the nuts, not the Karo syrup. Both Mono's look and name imply a lot less than you're going to get, for once the food's in sight the setting becomes worthy of *House Beautiful.* Then again, if the surroundings turned correspondingly sumptuous, I might become too intimidated to eat a pile of devilishly super chocolate squares with layers of mousse and crème anglaise with my fingers. Oh, hell. If it's good enough for the Moroccan lady, it's just peachy with me.

Mono, 344 West 11th Street (645-9009). Open Tuesday–Sunday 6–11 P.M., Sundays for brunch 11 A.M.–3 P.M. Appetizers, $5–$10; entrées, $14–$20. All major credit cards. ■



A Weekly Guide to Entertainment and the Arts in New York

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New Films

A Paralyzing Fear: The Story of Polio in America—The story of the culture of polio during the forties and fifties. By Nina Gilden Seavey. (1 hr. 30 mins.; NR) *Opens Friday at Film Forum.*

Afterglow—Two marriages hit the skids, and, seeking comfort, the unhappy spouses unknowingly swap partners. With Nick Nolte, Julie Christie, Lara Flynn Boyle, and Jonny Lee Miller. (1 hr. 53 mins.; R) *Regency.*

★**Amistad**—Steven Spielberg has made a stiff but powerful film about an actual revolt aboard a slave ship in 1839 and the constitutional struggle that followed in its wake. The best thing in the movie is very violent indeed, though it's not the revolt itself, which appears right at the beginning of *Amistad*. The Africans slaughter most of the crew, ordering the two Spanish survivors to take them back to Africa. But the Spaniards trick them and steer the *Amistad* north, and the ship is finally intercepted off the coast of Connecticut by the American Navy. Put on trial for murder and piracy, the Africans are defended by abolitionists, who hire a real-estate lawyer, Roger Baldwin (Matthew McConaughey), to try the case. The question arises: Were they born as slaves—on a plantation, say, in the West Indies—or as free men in Africa? Silent until then, Cinque (Djimon Hounsou) finally speaks (through a translator) and recounts the entire tale: The Africans, mostly from the Mende tribe, were kidnapped by rival tribesmen, kept in a slave fortress off the coast of Sierra Leone, and then taken across the ocean in an illegal Portuguese slaver, the *Tecora*. As Cinque speaks, we see it at last—the voyage, the excruciating transit in the cargo hold known in accounts of the slave trade as "the middle passage." Spielberg stages these scenes with a power that perhaps he alone in film history is capable of. The filmmakers' point of view is that the *Amistad* incident was a central way station between the imperfectly executed Declaration of Independence and the inevitable Civil War. Many of the players are conscious of the significance of the moment. The opportunistic, cunning President Martin Van Buren (Nigel Hawthorne), afraid of losing the South in the coming election, wants the Africans returned as property to Queen Isabella of Spain. The abolitionists, both white (Stellan Skarsgård) and black (Morgan Freeman), see the *Amistad* affair as Armageddon in the New World—the trial of Christian faith, of humanity's right to be saved. Just when *Amistad* is about to perish from nobility, Anthony Hopkins, as John Quincy Adams, saves the day. There are, I suppose, less sensational ways of doing this material, but Spielberg's way is astonishing, and the shock for us lies both in the images themselves and in the realization that we have never really seen this primal American story. By contrast, the comparable passages in *Roots* are no more than genteel. (Denby; 12/15/97) (2 hrs. 30 mins.; R) *Embassy 2–3.*

Opening
The Big Chill

The world's tallest mountain (29,028 feet) and the continent's biggest screen (eight stories) meet in 'Everest.' The IMAX film follows climbers from Kathmandu to the summit and—without sensationalizing—captures the drama of the deadliest season in the peak's history. Starts Friday, March 6, at Lincoln Square.

Photograph from MacGillivray Freeman Films.

An Alan Smithee Film—Burn, Hollywood, Burn—A British director named Alan Smithee (the pseudonym that directors use when they don't want their name on their movie) has no choice but to steal the only print of his Hollywood debut from the vile producers who have ruined it. With Ryan O'Neal, Eric Idle, Coolio, Chuck D., MC Lite, and Sandra Bernhard. (1 hr. 45 mins.; R) *Village East; Cinema I, II, Third Ave.; Lincoln Square.*

★**The Apostle**—This is the best movie ever made about a man of God—which is to say, the most honest and morally the most ambiguous. Robert Duvall plays Sonny, a Texan Pentecostal preacher, and he's completely on top of what he's doing. One night Sonny has a vision: His wife (Farrah Fawcett, who is perfectly good) is sleeping with a handsome young minister. He returns home in a drunken rage, and, with half the town watching, takes a baseball bat to the minister's head. Sonny has to disappear fast, and after deep-sixing his car, he hits the road and emerges as a newborn itinerant man of God. He settles into a bedraggled but pleasant Louisiana town, where, identifying himself as "E.F., The Apostle," he joins forces with a retired black minister and builds a congregation from the ground up. The movie sags a bit as Duvall romances Miranda Richardson, who plays a genteel southern lady both attracted to and repelled by the dynamic preacher. Still, *The Apostle* gets at something authentic and challenging—the insistent goodness of a man never free of dishonesty or sin. Sonny is too much a sinner simply to possess God. He remains an eternal suppliant, a candidate for blessedness, and therefore, despite everything, a hero. (Denby; 1/12/98) (About 1 hr. 50 mins.; NR) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas; Pavilion Theatre.*

★**As Good As It Gets**—In James L. Brooks's new picture, Helen Hunt plays Carol, a straight-talking single mother obsessed with the care of her severely asthmatic young son. Carol has neglected herself, and she falls into the one thing in the world that she needs least—a relationship with a matchlessly rude writer, Melvin (Jack Nicholson), who suffers from obsessive-compulsive disorder. Ferociously intelligent but mad as a hatter, Melvin needs two bars of soap to wash his hands and hates to be touched or even spoken to. Melvin torments his neighbor in Manhattan—a gay artist (Greg Kinnear)—but the movie, as we can tell early on, is a Scrooge story. The question is not when Melvin will melt but how. A superbly written and acted tearjerker. (Denby; 12/29/97) (2 hrs. 13 mins.; PG-13) *Village East; 19th Street East; Murray Hill Cinemas; Criterion Center; Gemini; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; Metro Cinema; Kingsway; The Movies at Bayside.*

Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life—A documentary of the life and times of the best-selling author and objectivist philosopher. Written and directed by Michael Paxton; narrated by Sharon Gless. (2 hrs. 21 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema.*

The Big Lebowski—Jeff Bridges plays an unemployed bowler who is mistaken for a rich man bearing the same name. With John Goodman, Julianne Moore, Steve Buscemi, David Huddleston, and John Turturro. Directed by Ethan and Joel Coen. (1 hr. 57 mins.; R) *Opens Friday.*

The Borrowers—John Goodman stars in the film version of the famous series of books about a miniature family. (1 hr. 30 mins.; G) *Chelsea; 84th Street; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas.*

The Break—Stephen Rea is an I.R.A. man trying to start over in New York, where he falls in with a group of Guatemalan freedom fighters. (2 hrs.; R) *Quad Cinema.*

Comrades, Almost a Love Story—The story of two loners from mainland China who chase their dreams and each other to Manhattan. Hong Kong's 1997 movie of the year. Starring Leon Lai and Maggie Cheung. Directed by Peter Chan. (1 hr. 45 mins.; NR) *Cinema Village 12th St.*

Dangerous Beauty—Katherine McCormack is a sixteenth-century Venetian courtesan who uses her brain to trade beauty for power. Also starring Rufus Sewell and Fred Ward. Directed by *thirtysomething*'s Marshall Herskovitz. (2 hrs.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Gemini; Lincoln Square; Pavilion Theatre.*

Ground Rules:

These brief reviews, where noted, are condensed versions of reviews by David Denby...A ★ denotes a current release that *New York* recommends, ranging from best-of-the-year picks to worthy curios to flawed movies with one outstanding element...Reviews are followed by the Manhattan theaters where the film is playing.

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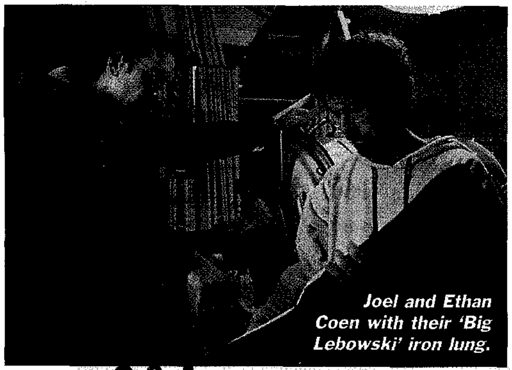

Joel and Ethan Coen with their 'Big Lebowski' iron lung.

Q & A

They Love L.A.

Though Joel and Ethan Coen live in New York, they've never shot a movie here (their latest—the *noir* bowling epic *The Big Lebowski*—was filmed in L.A.). We had a quick conversation with the media-shy brothers about location, location, location.

New York* Magazine: *So why haven't you ever shot a film in New York?

Joel: There's something about the movies we've done in the past, a certain exoticism to the locations, which is sort of attractive to us. It may be that living in New York undermines the city's exoticism and makes it less attractive. But to say we'd *never* make a movie in New York is ridiculous.

Ethan: Even *Hudsucker Proxy*, which is nominally set in New York, was shot on a soundstage in L.A. But it was far from realistic—more like somebody's idea of New York as opposed to the city itself.

Why do New Yorkers have such a hard time getting L.A.?

Ethan: Part of the reason is because L.A.'s so heterogeneous. It's not as uniform or so easy to take as a lot of other cities. It's not just far-flung geographically—it's also very diverse.

Joel: It's all built on the automobile, so you have these different cultures rubbing up against one another, but you also have enclaves, which become their own cultures unto themselves.

If you like it so much, why don't you live there?

Ethan: We just like New York more. I don't think it's a question of taking sides.

Joel: I like Rome, but I couldn't live there. It's the same thing with L.A. Also, in all sorts of ways it's a company town, and if you're in the movie business, that can be a very suffocating environment.

In The Big Lebowski, *L.A. comes off as a kind of slacker's paradise.*

Joel: Oh yeah, sure. The weather's one thing. It's much more conducive to a kind of semi-living on the street.

Ethan: Because of the lack of seasons you only need one wardrobe. David D'Arcy

Dark City—A man discovers his memories aren't his own and fights to discover reality. With Kiefer Sutherland, Rufus Sewell, Jennifer Connelly, and William Hurt. Directed by Alex Proyas. (1 hr. 43 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; 19th Street East; Criterion Center; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; New Coliseum; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Plaza.*

Deconstructing Harry—There are some excruciatingly funny moments in Woody Allen's new movie, but scandalously entertaining as parts of it are, the picture still left me in the foulest of foul moods. Ostensibly, it's about a selfish writer, Harry Block (Woody Allen), who travels to his alma mater in order to accept an honorary degree. Harry is at an impasse in both his creative and his personal life, and as he tries to get someone to accompany him on his trip, various women show up and tear into him—he has cheated on them, he has used their experiences with him in his novels and stories, he's a shit, a twerp, a betrayer, and so on. Woody Allen stages the fictional version of various marital events, drawn from Harry's books, and then he shows us the people that the fictions are based on—often very different from the originals. Harry may be an utter dog, but he attracts and disappoints one beautiful young woman after another—and what could be a greater ego blast than that kind of "self-criticism"? It's getting a little creepy to watch a short, pale 61-year-old man kissing (in one movie) Elisabeth Shue, Judy Davis, Hazelle Goodman, Amy Irving, Kirstie Alley, etc., etc. I have nothing against egocentricity, but Allen doesn't seem to realize that he's left the impression that women are drawn to Harry only because his creator is a famous movie director. (Denby; 12/29/97) (1 hr. 36 mins.; R) *The Screening Room; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Desperate Measures—Andy Garcia is a police officer with a son who needs a donor transplant, and the perfect match is a convicted multiple murderer. (1 hr. 40 mins.; R) *Criterion Center.*

Everest—The first-ever IMAX footage from Everest documents the 1996 summit climb of an international expedition. Directed by David Breashears and Ed Viesturs. (45 mins.; NR) *Opens Friday at Lincoln Square.*

Fallen Angels—Wong Kar-Wai's latest frantic fantasy, about a hit man who's ready to wind things down and the two women who keep him in the game. (1 hr. 36 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

The Full Monty—Robert Carlyle stars as Gaz, an out-of-work steelworker in Sheffield, England, who rounds up his unemployed friends and persuades them to put together a male strip troupe. Directed by Peter Cattaneo. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Art Greenwich Twin; Sutton; Olympia Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; The Movies at Bayside.*

The Gingerbread Man—Shakespearean actor Kenneth Branagh plays a Savannah attorney (a drawling Famke Janssen plays his ex-wife) who gets involved with a trashy waitress (Embeth Davidtz) and her crazy old man (Robert Duvall). Story by John Grisham; directed by Robert Altman. (1 hr. 55 mins.; R) *Chelsea; Coronet.*

★Good Will Hunting—Mopping up at M.I.T., Will Hunting (Matt Damon) casually solves problems left on the blackboards, problems intended to stump the best mathematical minds in America. The formidable Professor Lambeau (Stellan Skarsgård), recognizing Will's uncanny talent, takes the boy under his wing, keeping him out of jail by agreeing to get him into therapy. Will lands in the office of Lambeau's old friend and rival Sean McGuire (Robin Williams), a bit of a screw-up himself but perhaps the one shrink in Boston who can understand Will. The boy doesn't want to be "saved." He wants to be left alone. People turn themselves inside out trying to help him, but he repels them all. This movie has wit and temperament to burn—there isn't a dead scene in it anywhere. In the end, however, the script takes a disastrous turn toward conventionality. What I will always remember is an edge of temper. The film persuades us that genius is of incalculable worth but utter hell to live with. (Denby; 12/8/97) (2 hrs. 5 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Chelsea West; Murray Hill Cinemas; New York Twin; Lincoln Square; Pavilion Theatre.*

Great Expectations—A modern-day twist on the Dickens tale, with Ethan Hawke as a poor artist and fisherman whose mysterious benefactor sets him up as SoHo's newest hot talent. Gwyneth Paltrow is the pretty girl he's known and loved forever—though, given her pervasive unpleasantness, it's not clear why. Directed by Alfonso Cuaron. (1 hr. 50 mins.; R) *Chelsea; 59th Street East; Ziegfeld.*

Hurricane Streets—A young East Village boy tries to get off the juvenile-delinquent track he's on. Winner of three Sundance awards. Directed by Morgan J. Freeman. (1 hr. 28 mins.; R) *Movies at Staten Island.*

I Love You . . . Don't Touch Me—A twentysomething virgin tries to understand the reality of today's dating world. The directorial debut of Julie Davis. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *First & 62nd St. Cinema; 62nd and Broadway.*

Jackie Brown—Quentin Tarantino has written some scandalously funny lines for Samuel L. Jackson, who plays one Ordell Robbie, an egotistical L.A. gun seller. Ordell keeps a number of people in his employ, including a libidinous white surfer girl (Bridget Fonda); a mangy ex-con (Robert De Niro); and a stewardess, Jackie Brown (Pam Grier), who carries cash for Ordell back and forth between Los Angeles and Mexico. The movie is about Jackie's attempt to break free of Ordell and fleece him of his money. The picture is actually an elongated and ambitious B movie—a dogged homage to the kind of atmospheric minor crime picture that Tarantino, having grown up in a video store, enjoys more than he does prestige movies. He has built the movie around Pam Grier, the strapping star of early-seventies black exploitation movies, yet she's a limited performer, and she can't really bloom in the realistic, matter-of-fact framework that Tarantino has constructed for her. Most of the time, Tarantino pairs her with another B-movie actor, the somber, stone-faced Robert Forster. When Forster acts with Grier we realize what Tarantino is getting at. These two actors, sitting across a table in some dim bar, don't open anything up; they're not particularly expressive. Perhaps Tarantino is saying that this is what people in the crime world are really like—sly, mean, and limited. The plot is enormously complicated and never speeds up. At the climax, in fact, it slows down: Tarantino shows us the same sequence of events three times consecutively, each time from the point of view of a different character. After the formal bravura of *Pulp Fiction*, it's as if he were saying, "Look, no tricks; everything is exactly as it seems." So it may turn out that Quentin Tarantino is not, after all, the American Godard, not a mall-rat pop genius eager to transform pulp into formally demanding art. He really likes pulp for its stiff, repetitive, bullheaded qualities. He likes it so much, he's made his own sober version of it. (Denby; 1/5/98) (2 hrs. 34 mins.; R) *Embassy 2–3.*

Kissing a Fool—David Schwimmer has doubts about his fiancé's commitment so he asks his best friend to test her. With Bonnie Hunt, Jason Lee, and Mili Avital. Directed by Doug Ellin. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Waverly; Chelsea; Criterion Center; 86th Street; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Lincoln Square; Metro Cinema; Kingsway; Main Street Cinemas; Movieworld; The Movies at Bayside.*

Krippendorf's Tribe—See Denby, page 48. (1 hr. 30 mins.; PG-13) *Village East; 19th Street East; Cinema I, II, Third Ave.; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; Movieworld.*

Kundun—Unlike the fatuous, conventional *Seven Years in Tibet*, this movie has been made with love. It has an assured beauty and an exquisite formality that honor the subject. And yet, lovely as it is, *Kundun* is of very little dramatic interest—it's an extremely beautiful, boring movie. A boy grows into a gracious and modest young

Photograph by Merrick Morton/Gramercy Pictures.

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man, a man not always sure that he's up to the role of leader; but still, he has no great spiritual crisis, no awful time of testing, and everyone in Lhasa gathers around and tutors and protects him. Approaching an alien tradition, Scorsese is entirely respectful, and the respectfulness dulls out the movie. I can't escape the feeling that Buddhism is an impossible subject for the movies. After all, great movie characters are men of overbearing will—Charles Foster Kane, or Vito and Michael Corleone, or Scorsese's Jake La Motta—not characters who renounce will. (Denby; 1/5/98) (1 hr. 53 mins.; PG) *Village East; Guild 50th Street.*

The Leading Man—Jon Bon Jovi stars as a manipulative Hollywood star who worms his way into the middle of a complicated love triangle while making his theatrical debut in London. With Lambert Wilson, Thandie Newton, Anna Galiena, and Barry Humphries. Directed by John Duigan. (1 hr. 36 mins.; R) *Opens Friday.*

Leather Jacket Love Story—An erotic gay comedy about a love affair between a valley boy and a biker. Starring Sean Tataryn and Christopher Bradley. (1 hr. 40 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema.*

★**Live Flesh**—This is the best movie from Almodóvar since that Iberian screwball classic *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*. The story, which has been freely adapted from a Ruth Rendell novel, teases symmetry into an Almodóvarian pretzel. Eager to become the world's greatest lover, our hero Victor (Liberto Rabal) sleeps with the wives of the two Madrid policemen who once put him in jail—first Clara (the great Angela Molina, of the tragic mask), who is much adored by her obsessive husband, Sancho (Pepe Sancho). Taking Victor in hand, she teaches him some of the more essential points of lovemaking, and under Clara's tutelage, he becomes a saner and gentler fellow—a better man, in every sense. Bored with Clara, Victor pursues the exquisite Elena (Francesca Neri), the woman who lured him into trouble some years earlier. It was at Elena's house that the 20-year-old Victor accidentally shot Sancho's partner, a promising young police detective named David (Javier Bardem). After the shooting, Elena, a rich girl dabbling in drugs, was so guilty over her own role in the affair that she married David, who is now confined to a wheelchair. He's a thoroughly virile man in every sense but the literal one. So the adulterous joining of Victor and Elena is charged with the many varieties of desire, guilt, and ambivalence. It's a scene worth waiting for—certainly the most sensual of Almodóvar's heterosexual love scenes. For Almodóvar, sexual passion is part of the cruel joke of Spanish guilt and fatalism. Sex is a matter of life and death that drives people into absurd situations; Almodóvar's most tragic scenes slide into farce (and vice versa). Despite his erotic fixations, Pedro Almodóvar is the cinema's last true innocent. (Denby; 1/26/98) (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Love and Death on Long Island—John Hurt is a British man of letters who happens upon a film called *Hotpants College II* and falls in love with its young American star. With Jason Priestley. (1 hr. 33 mins.; R) *Opens Friday at the Angelika and Lincoln Plaza.*

Love Walked In—Denis Leary is a lounge pianist who uses his own pretty wife (Aitana Sanchez Gijon) to set up a wealthy patron as an adulterer. With Terence Stamp. Directed by Juan J. Campanella. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Opens Friday.*

Ma Vie en Rose—The incredibly appealing story of a little boy who thinks he's a little girl and the emotional upheavals this stubborn belief creates among his family and neighbors. Winner of a 1996 César award. (1 hr. 28 mins.; NR) *Quad Cinema; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Men With Guns—On the eve of his retirement, a Latin American doctor sets off to visit the students he trained for village medicine and discovers the political persecution that lies beyond the city. Starring Federico Luppi, Mandy Patinkin, and Kathryn Grody. Directed by John Sayles. (2 hrs. 8 mins.; NR) *Opens Friday.*

Moon Over Broadway—A documentary of the making of Carol Burnett's Broadway comedy *Moon Over Buffalo*. Created by D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus. (1 hr. 38 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

★**Mrs. Dalloway**—In this accomplished but slightly tedious adaptation of Virginia Woolf's great novel, Vanessa Redgrave is Clarissa Dalloway, a prosperous woman—married to a member of parliament—who is preparing for her annual party. In the hours before the party, Mrs. Dalloway reviews her life, casting back 30 years to easy summer days at her family's country estate, where, as a young woman, she rejected a demanding, puppyish suitor, Peter Walsh, in favor of the more stable and successful Richard Dalloway. Did she marry the right man? *Mrs. Dalloway* is at its most inventive, and most Woolfian, when Redgrave is front and center, behaving with elaborate social grace and thinking very different things to herself. Just hearing Redgrave pronounce the word "dis-ahs-ter" (her appraisal of her own party) is reason enough to see the movie. In any case, I can't imagine any other actress large enough (in every sense) to hold together this plotless story. Redgrave makes the heroine all of a piece—timid, conventional, but alive to every breeze of consciousness. (Denby; 2/23/98) (1 hr. 37 mins.; PG-13) *Angelika Film Center; Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

Nil by Mouth—Gary Oldman wrote and directed this story of the grim realities of today's working class in England. Starring Kathy Burke and Ray Winstone. (2 hrs. 8 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center.*

Palmetto—See Denby, page 49. (2 hrs.; R) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea; Murray Hill Cinemas; Criterion Center; Gemini; Orpheum 7; 84th Street; Pavilion Theatre; Movieworld.*

Opening

When He Was Good

Before he murdered fellow party boy Angel Melendez, Michael Alig starred as himself in 'Shampoo Horns,' the story of a group of club kids who spend a night dressing up, doing coke, and chasing hardbodies. Eerily, the onscreen evening also ends with a bloody death. The Spanish production—shot at the Limelight—opens Friday, March 6, at Quad Cinema.

A Personal Journey With Martin Scorsese Through American Movies—A week-long sneak preview of Scorsese's documentary, in which he reflects on film clips from the last 100 years of American cinema and tells how movies shaped his character and his work. To be released on video in April. (3 hrs. 46 mins.; NR) *Opens Friday at Gotham Cinema.*

Rashomon—Akira Kurosawa's 1951 story of a rape, a murder, and the unknowability of truth in twelfth-century Kyoto. Starring Toshiro Mifune and Machiko Kyo. (1 hr. 28 mins.; NR) *Film Forum.*

The Real Blonde—See Denby, page 49. (1 hr. 47 mins.; R) *Waverly; Chelsea; Coronet; Lincoln Square.*

The Replacement Killers—Chow Yun-Fat is an assassin whose desire to leave the business gets him in trouble with the mob; Mira Sorvino is the petty criminal who guides him out of trouble. Directed by Antoine Fuqua. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; Chelsea; 84th Street.*

Senseless—Marlon Wayans is a workaholic who competes with David Spade for a $60,000-a-year analyst's job. (1 hr. 30 mins.; R) *Village East; 19th Street East; UA East; 84th Street; Movieworld; The Movies at Bayside.*

Sphere—At the end of *Sphere*, the three principals—Dustin Hoffman, Samuel L. Jackson, and Sharon Stone—agree, for the good of humanity, to forget everything that has happened to them in the movie up to that point. This is a pact I can only rush to join, and with exactly the same motive. There are some things that humankind is just better off not knowing about. (Denby; 3/2/98) (About 2 hrs.; R) *Village East; 34th Street Showplace; Chelsea West; 72nd St. East; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; New Coliseum; Nova; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Movieworld.*

Spice World—The U.K.'s Spice Girls tool around London. (1 hr. 30 mins.; PG) *Movieworld.*

★**The Sweet Hereafter**—Atom Egoyan's film is a rarity. Adapted from Russell Banks's 1991 novel devoted to the aftermath of a devastating school-bus accident, the film appears to be a kind of detective story. A big-city lawyer, Mitchell Stephens (Ian Holm), enters a snowy, forlorn town in British Columbia after fourteen children have died and travels about interviewing the parents and survivors, desperate to enlist everyone, including the teenage survivor, Nicole (Sarah Polley), in a grievance suit. As Stephens investigates, we see what led up to the accident—the family life of the town, with its fissures and its secrets, including adultery and a suggestion of incest—and eventually we see the accident itself. The film cuts backward and forward in time, and we expect that Stephens will uncover some amazing circumstance that will explain everything. We experience the accident through the eyes of Billy (Bruce Greenwood), who is driving behind the bus and is the father of two of the children. Billy sees; he's the hero of the movie, an unillusioned man, rejecting avenging lawyers and bad-luck omens in favor of the most bitter reality. His adulterous scenes with Alberta Watson (the mother in David O. Russell's *Spanking the Monkey*) have an acrid intimacy. The actors are all excellent in a plain style that avoids irony, pose, perversity. By the end of the movie, everything comes together—the answer to the detective inquiry is all that is most difficult to face in life. If there were many movies as reality-bound as this one, I think I would go mad. That this one exists, however, is almost a blessing. (Denby; 11/24/97) (1 hr. 52 mins.; R) *Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.*

★**Titanic**—Writer-director James Cameron has pulled it off. This fabulously expensive watery epic is actually a very good movie. *Titanic* begins with a treasure hunter, Brock Lovett (Bill Paxton), who is obsessed with the sunken hulk. Lovett's submersible robot enters one of the deluxe staterooms to retrieve not the famous diamond he was looking for but only a drawing of a naked young woman wearing the stone. It turns out that the woman, Rose, is still alive; she's an articulate 100-year-old beauty (Gloria Stuart) who joins Lovett at his ship and then holds him and his crew of techno-ruffians in thrall with her story of what happened. Back in 1912, the 17-year-old Rose DeWitt Bukater (Kate Winslet) boards the ship in utter misery. Rose is accompanied by her awful fiancé, Cal Hockley (Billy Zane), a domineering steel-baron heir from Pittsburgh, and her snobbish mother (Frances Fisher). Onboard, Rose meets her soulmate, Jack Dawson (Leonardo Di-

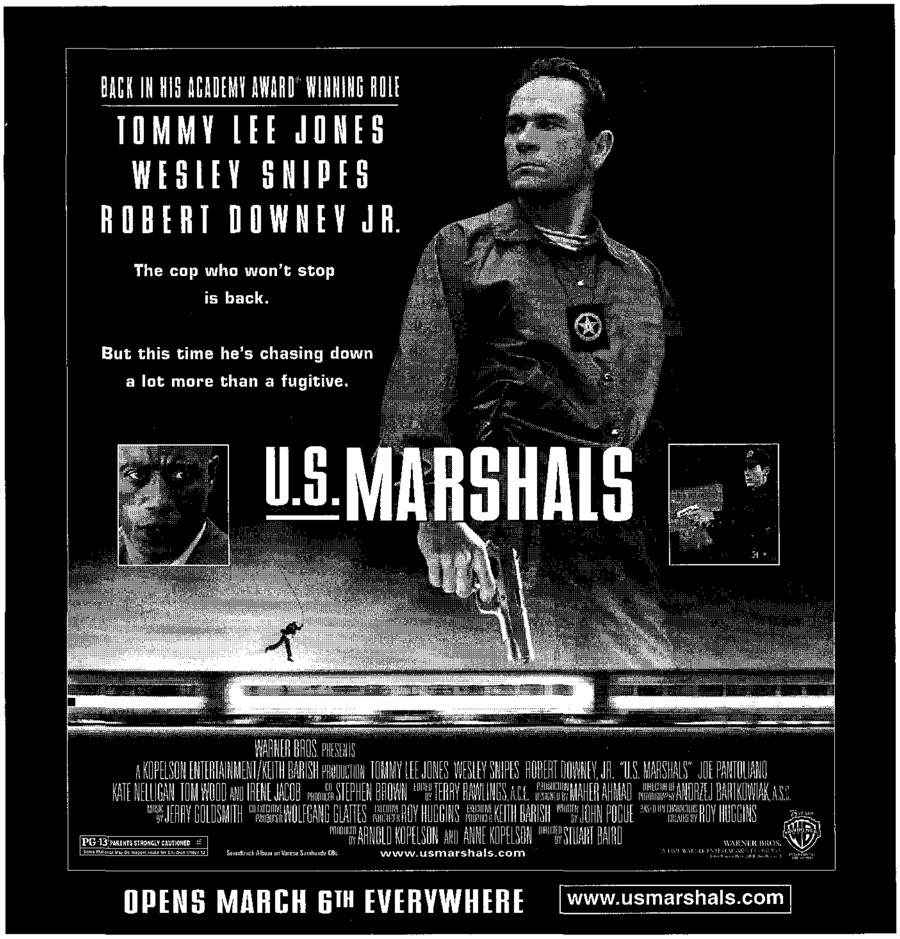
Photograph from Esicma Productions.

Caprio). A gambler, Jack has the wit to see that Rose's unhappiness hides a bold, deeply romantic and sexual nature. Except for the crude, good-hearted Denver millionairess Molly Brown (Kathy Bates), the wealthy are unspeakably rude or just frightened and starchy. Jack, the interloper, takes Rose down to steerage, where the real people are having themselves a fine time drinking and dancing up a storm. This sort of cheesy stuff is redeemed only by the romantic charge between Winslet and DiCaprio. The sinking is lovely—detailed, agonizingly slow at first and then rushed and panicky and grandly gruesome at the end. As Jack and Rose hang at the railing, people lose their grip and go crashing down the deck or fall from the heights into the water. After the ship goes under, Cameron has his finest, cruelest moment—the survivors left in the vast expanse of freezing water wailing in confusion. As for Rose, she is delivered into an active and brilliant life. The ship may be ponderous, but Cameron's conception stays light in the water. (Denby; 12/22–29/97) (3 hrs. 17 mins.; PG-13) *Village Theatre VII; 34th Street Showplace; Chelsea; Astor Plaza; First & 62nd St. Cinema; Orpheum 7; Lincoln Square; New Coliseum; Nova; Olympia Theatre; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas; Movieworld; Plaza; The Movies at Bayside.*

Twilight—Paul Newman is an aging private investigator who does a favor for an old friend (Gene Hackman) and gets caught up in a murder mystery. With Susan Sarandon and Stockard Channing. Directed by Robert Benton. (1 hr. 36 mins.; R) *Opens Friday.*

★**Wag the Dog**—Barry Levinson's political and media satire goes as fast as the wind, and that's a relief because the idea behind the movie is thin. Very thin—and at times offensively glib. So if Levinson had directed with a heavy hand, or paused for more than an instant's reflection, he would have killed the nasty fun. It's less than two weeks before an election, and the president, seeking another term, is accused of molesting a teenage girl just outside the Oval Office. That the allegation may be false is not the point; the Washington *Post* is about to run the story. What to do? The president's operative Winifred Ames (Anne Heche) calls in a Dick Morris–like Mr. Fixit, Conrad Brean (Robert De Niro), and Brean, together with a big-deal Hollywood producer, Stanley Motss (Dustin Hoffman), distracts the press and the public. They whip up a nonexistent war with mighty Albania, complete with sinister Albanian terrorists crossing the Canadian border carrying a nuke in a suitcase. Now, satire doesn't have to be responsible, but it does have to be internally coherent, and this idea, however funny, is so extremely opportunistic—and at times so crassly conceived—that it falls into a variety of contradictions of its own making. (The script was written by David Mamet, who claims never to have read the novel—*American Hero*, by Larry Beinhart—that an earlier version of the screenplay was based on.) I have to say that *Wag the Dog* is accomplished and at times viciously funny. Levinson, shooting very fast and cheaply, creates a likable, low-key world of rogues and scoundrels working together to gull the public; we enjoy their company, we enjoy the pretense that political and media life is like this—fast, wisecracking, devastatingly effective. The picture conveys an irresistible pleasure in fakery for its own sake, and that's its charm. (Denby; 1/19/98) (1 hr. 40 mins.; R) *Village Theatre VII; Murray Hill Cinemas; Sutton; Lincoln Square.*

★**The Wedding Singer**—In Sandler's new comedy (set in 1985), he's a suburban New Jersey entertainer at weddings and "functions," a charmer with long hair who makes eyes at aunts and uncles as he sings. On the side, he gives voice lessons to an old lady (Ellen Dow)—basically, he's a mild fellow who wants to get along and make his way in the world. He spends most of the film flirting with Drew Barrymore, who plays a plump angelic blonde. It's a very pleasant movie but soft as a down quilt. Sandler's not only the life of the party; he's a part-time shrink, a peacemaker who brings people together. Of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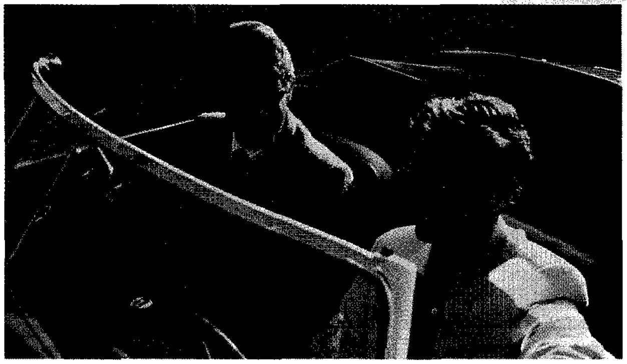
course, no one takes him very seriously. Why would anyone wed a man who sings at weddings? Will this schlumpy guy defeat an overconfident Wall Street type and win Drew Barrymore? Sandler is a gifted young man, but if he's going to become a big comedy star in the movies, he's got to either blow the place sky-high or find a more challenging turf. He makes comedy about the underside of blandness. In *The Wedding Singer,* the blandness threatens to take over. With Christine Taylor and Alexis Arquette. (Denby; 3/2/98) (1 hr. 35 mins.; PG-13) *Village East; 19th Street East; Cinema I, II, Third Ave.; Criterion Center; 86th Street; Lincoln Square; Kingsway; Pavilion Theatre; Centre Sunnyside; Main Street Cinemas; Movieworld.*

Welcome to Woop Woop—A New York con man on the run in Australia picks up a hitchhiker and wakes up married to her and stuck in a town called Woop Woop. With Johnathon Schaech and Susie Porter. Directed by Stephan Elliott. (1 hr. 45 mins.; R) *Opens Friday.*

★**The Wings of the Dove**—The movie differs from Henry James's novel in a hundred particulars, but the great point is that it works on its own terms, which is all one can ask. At the center, there are two young people who love each other but need money. Kate Croy (Helena Bonham Carter), clever, beautiful, and distinguished, lives in London with her wealthy aunt (Charlotte Rampling), who is determined to marry her off to a rich man and who does what she can to break up Kate's relationship with the charming but penurious young journalist Merton Densher (Linus Roache). By degrees, and without his quite understanding it, Densher gets pulled into a conspiracy that Kate engineers. For there is another young person in their social circle, the fabulously wealthy American heiress Millie Theale (Alison Elliott), who is sweet, generous, and wasting away from some nameless disease. Millie needs a lover; she needs to live. Kate, who genuinely likes her, wants Millie to be happy and to know love—with Densher, who would then inherit the money, after Millie's death, that would allow Kate to marry him. The complicating factor—Henry James always has a complicating factor—is that Densher falls for Millie; or rather, he falls for her desire to experience everything she can before dying. The filmmakers have aggressively bumped the period ahead from 1902 to 1910; the characters take the subway, smoke cigarettes furiously, and attend a gallery exhibit of Klimt's decadent nudes. We get the point: Kate Croy and Merton Densher are modern personalities, rebels against the constrictions of their time. Rebellion is certainly not something that Henry James had in mind, but it's a minor vulgarization. (Denby; 11/10/97) (1 hr. 43 mins.; R) *Angelika Film Center; Beekman; Pavilion Theatre.*



Photograph by C. Reardon/CFP Distribution.

Manhattan

Below 14th Street

Angelika Film Center—18 W. Houston St. (995-2000) *Dangerous Beauty; Good Will Hunting; Gummo; Live Flesh; Mrs. Dalloway; Nil By Mouth; The Wings of the Dove.*

Art Greenwich Twin—Greenwich Ave. at 12th St. (505-CINE#616) *L. A. Confidential; The Full Monty.*

Cinema Village 12th St—22 E. 12th St. (924-3363) *Comrades, Almost a Love Story.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Film Forum—209 W. Houston St. (727-8110) *A Paralyzing Fear: The Story of Polio in America; Fallen Angels; Happy Together; Moon Over Broadway; Rashomon.*

Quad Cinema—34 W.13th St. (255-8800) *Ayn Rand: A Sense of Life; The Break; Leather Jacket Love Story; Ma Vie en Rose.*

The Screening Room—54 Varick St. (below Canal) (334-2100) *Deconstructing Harry; The City of Lost Children.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Village East—189 Second Ave., at 12th St. (529-6799) *An Alan Smithee Film—Burn, Hollywood, Burn; As Good As It Gets; Krippendorf's Tribe; Kundun; Senseless; Sphere; The Rocky Horror Picture Show; The Wedding Singer.* (See also "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Village Theatre VII—66 Third Ave., at 11th St. (982-0400) *The Apostle; Dark City; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Titanic; Wag the Dog.*

Waverly—323 Sixth Ave., at W. 3rd St. (505-CINE#603) *Kissing a Fool; The Real Blonde.*

Opening

Boy Trouble

Props to Jason Priestley, who made the smartest career move of any 'Beverly Hills 90210' star when he snagged a role opposite John Hurt in 'Love and Death on Long Island.' Priestley plays an actor whose role in a teen flick called 'Hotpants College II' makes him the obsession of a cloistered man of letters (Hurt). The festival favorite starts Friday, March 6.

14th–41st Streets

19th Street East—890 Broadway, at 19th St. (260-8000) *L.A. Confidential; As Good As It Gets; Dark City; Krippendorf's Tribe; Senseless; The Wedding Singer.*

34th Street Showplace—238 E. 34th St. (532-5544) *L. A. Confidential; Sphere; Titanic.*

Chelsea—260 W. 23rd St. (505-CINE#597) *The Apostle; The Borrowers; The Gingerbread Man; Great Expectations; Kissing a Fool; Palmetto; The Real Blonde; The Replacement Killers; Titanic.*

Chelsea West—333 W. 23rd St. (505-CINE#614) *Good Will Hunting; Sphere.*

Murray Hill Cinemas—160 E. 34th St. (689-6548) *As Good As It Gets; Good Will Hunting; Palmetto; Wag the Dog.*

42nd–60th Streets

59th Street East—239 E. 59th St. (505-CINE#615) *Great Expectations.*

Astor Plaza—44th St. bet. Broadway and Eighth Ave. (869-8340) *Titanic.*

Cinema I, II, Third Ave.—1001 Third Ave., at 60th St. (753-6022) *An Alan Smithee Film—Burn, Hollywood, Burn; Krippendorf's Tribe; The Wedding Singer.*

Coronet—993 Third Ave., bet. 59th and 60th Sts. (505-CINE#608) *The Gingerbread Man; The Real Blonde.*

Criterion Center—1514 Broadway, bet. 44th and 45th Sts. (354-0900) *As Good As It Gets; Caught Up; Dark City; Desperate Measures; Kissing a Fool; Palmetto; The Wedding Singer.*

Crown Gotham—969 Third Ave., bet. 57th and 58th Sts. (759-2262) *Mrs. Brown; Shall We Dance?.*

Eastside Playhouse—919 Third Ave., bet. 55th and 56th Sts. (755-3020) *Israel Film Festival.* (See "Museums, Societies, Etc.")

Embassy 1—1560 Broadway, bet. 46th and 47th Sts. (302-0494) *Krippendorf's Tribe.*

Embassy 2-3—701 Seventh Ave., bet. 47th and 48th Sts. (730-7262) *Amistad; Jackie Brown; Scream 2.*

Guild 50th Street—33 W. 50th St. (757-2406) *Kundun.*

State—1540 Broadway (391-2900) *Good Will Hunting; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere.*

Sutton—205 E. 57th St. (759-1411) *The Full Monty; Wag the Dog.*

Worldwide Cinemas—340 W. 50th St. (505-CINE#610) *Boogie Nights; Home Alone 3; The Ice Storm; The Jackal; Kiss the Girls; The Rainmaker; Tomorrow Never Dies.*

Ziegfeld—141 W. 54th St. (505-CINE#602) *Great Expectations.*

61st Street and Above, East Side

72nd St. East—1230 Third Ave., bet. 71st and 72nd Sts. (879-1313) *Sphere.*

86th Street—125 E. 86th St. (505-CINE#604) *Kissing a Fool; The Wedding Singer.*

86th Street East—210 E. 86th St. (249-1144) *Closed for renovations.*

Beekman—1254 Second Ave., bet. 65th and 66th Sts. (505-CINE#606) *The Wings of the Dove.*

First & 62nd St. Cinema—400 E. 62nd St. (505-CINE#957) *The Apostle; Dark City; I Love You . . . Don't Touch Me; Kissing a Fool; Titanic.*

Gemini—1210 Second Ave., at 64th St. (832-1670) *As Good As It Gets; Dangerous Beauty; Palmetto.*

New York Twin—1271 Second Ave., bet. 66th and 67th Sts. (744-7339) *L. A. Confidential; Good Will Hunting.*

Orpheum 7—1538 Third Ave., at 86th St. (828-9738) *As Good As It Gets; Caught Up; Dark City; Krippendorf's Tribe; Palmetto; Sphere; Titanic.*

UA East—1629 First Ave., at 85th St. (249-5100) *Senseless.*

61st Street and Above, West Side

62nd and Broadway—1871 Broadway, at 62nd St. (505-CINE#864) *I Love You . . . Don't Touch Me.*

84th Street—2310 Broadway, at 84th St. (877-3600) *L. A. Confidential; The Borrowers; Caught Up; Dark City; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Senseless.*

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas—30 Lincoln Plaza, on Broadway bet. 62nd and 63rd Sts. (757-2280) *The Apostle; Deconstructing Harry; Live Flesh; Ma Vie en Rose; Mrs. Dalloway; The Sweet Hereafter.*

Lincoln Square—1998 Broadway, at 68th St. (336-5000) *An Alan Smithee Film—Burn, Hollywood, Burn; As Good As It Gets; Dangerous Beauty; Good Will Hunting; Kissing A Fool; Krippendorf's Tribe; The Real Blonde; Sphere; Titanic; Wag the Dog; The Wedding Singer.* IMAX: *L5—First City in Space; Four Million House Guests; Across the Sea of Time; Into the Deep; Titanic.*

Metro Cinema—2626 Broadway, bet. 99th and 100th Sts. (505-CINE#609) *As Good As It Gets; Kissing a Fool.*

New Coliseum—701 W. 181st St. (740-1545) *Caught Up; Dark City; Sphere; Titanic.*

Nova—3589 Broadway, bet. 147th and 148th Sts. (862-5728) *Caught Up; Sphere; Titanic.*

Olympia Theatre—2770 Broadway, bet. 106th and 107th Sts. (505-CINE#613) *The Full Monty; Titanic.*

Regency—1987 Broadway, bet. 67th and 68th Sts. (505-CINE#585) *Afterglow.*

Bronx

Area Code 718

Bay Plaza—2210 Bartow Ave., behind Bay Plaza Mall (320-3020) *The Borrowers; Caught Up; Dark City; Good Will Hunting; Kissing a Fool; Krippen-*

dorf's Tribe; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.

Concourse Plaza—214 E. 161th St. (588-8800) *The Borrowers; Caught Up; Dark City; Deep Rising; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; Titanic.*

Whitestone—2505 Bruckner Blvd., at Hutchinson River Pkwy. (409-9037) *L. A. Confidential; The Borrowers; Caught Up; Dark City; Deep Rising; Kissing a Fool; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Brooklyn

Area Code 718

Alpine—6817 Fifth Ave., at 69th St. (777-FILM#580) *The Apostle; As Good As It Gets; The Borrowers; Good Will Hunting; Kissing a Fool; Krippendorf's Tribe; Palmetto; Titanic.*

Canarsie—9310 Ave. L, at E. 93rd St. (251-0700) *Caught Up; Dark City; Titanic.*

Cobble Hill—265 Court St. (596-9113) *The Apostle; As Good As It Gets; Dangerous Beauty; Good Will Hunting; The Wedding Singer.*

Fortway—6720 Ft. Hamilton Pkwy., at 68th St. (777-FILM#578) *Caught Up; Dark City; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Sphere; The Wedding Singer.*

Kenmore—Church Ave. nr. Flatbush Ave. (777-FILM#576) *The Borrowers; Caught Up; Dark City; The Replacement Killers; Senseless.*

Kent Triplex—Coney Island Ave. at Ave. H (338-3371) *Caught Up; Dark City; Titanic.*

Kings Plaza—5201 Kings Plaza; Flatbush Ave. at Ave. U (777-FILM#579) *The Borrowers; Caught Up; Dark City; Krippendorf's Tribe; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Senseless.*

Kingsway—946 Kings Hwy. at Coney Island Ave. (777-FILM#577) *As Good As It Gets; Kissing a Fool; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Marboro—6817 Bay Pkwy., at 69th St. (232-4000) *Good Will Hunting; Senseless; Sphere; The Wedding Singer.*

Pavilion Theatre—188 Prospect Park West, Brooklyn (369-0838) *The Apostle; The Borrowers; Dangerous Beauty; Dark City; Good Will Hunting; Palmetto; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer; The Wings of the Dove.*

Ridgewood—55-27 Myrtle Ave., at Putnam Ave. (821-5993) *Caught Up; Dark City; The Replacement Killers; Senseless; Titanic.*

The Movies at Sheepshead Bay—3907 Shore Pkwy, off Exit 9 at Belt Pkwy. (615-1700) *L.A. Confidential; As Good As It Gets; The Borrowers; Great Expectations; Kissing a Fool; Krippendorf's Tribe; Palmetto; The Replacement Killers; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Queens

Area Code 718

Astoria—28-60 Steinway St. (726-1279) *Caught Up; Kissing a Fool; Senseless; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

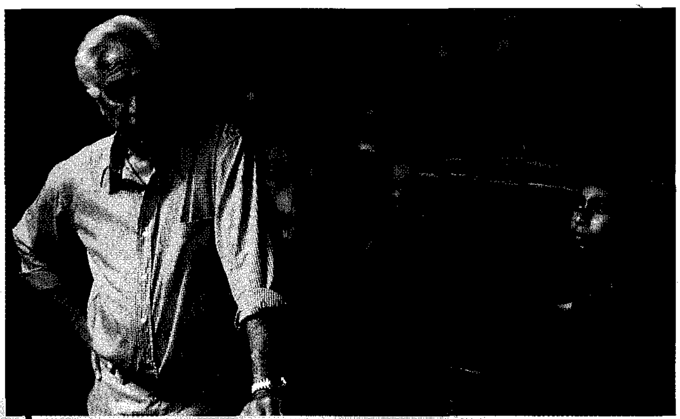
Bay Terrace—211-01 26th Ave. and Bell Blvd., Bayside (428-4040) *L. A. Confidential; The Apostle; Good Will Hunting; Krippendorf's Tribe; Sphere; The Wedding Singer.*

Centre Sunnyside—42-17 Queens Blvd. (361-6869) *L.A. Confidential; The Borrowers; Dark City; The Full Monty; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Cinema City—183-15 Horace Harding Expy., at 183rd St., Fresh Meadows (777-FILM#592) *As Good As It Gets; Dark City; Krippendorf's Tribe; Palmetto; Senseless.*

Cinemart—106-03 Metropolitan Ave., at 72nd Rd., Forest Hills (261-2244) *The Apostle; Dark City; Krippendorf's Tribe; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Continental—70-20 Austin St., Forest Hills (544-1020) *The Full Monty; Good Will Hunting; Great Expectations; Sphere.*



Opening
Guerrilla Medicine

In *Men With Guns,* an aging Latin American doctor (Federico Luppi, above) tries to visit the medical students he once trained as missionaries—and discovers a bloody, hidden war raging in his country's remote villages. The latest from writer-director John Sayles—filmed entirely in Mexico—opens Friday, March 6.

Crossbay—94-11 Rockaway Blvd., at Woodhaven Blvd., Ozone Park (848-1738) *Caught Up; Senseless; Sphere.*

Crossbay II—92-10 Rockaway Blvd., at 93rd St., Ozone Park (641-5330) *The Borrowers; Dark City; Great Expectations; Kissing a Fool; Krippendorf's Tribe; The Replacement Killers; Spice World; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Elmwood—57-02 Hoffman Dr., Elmhurst (429-4770) *Krippendorf's Tribe; Senseless; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Forest Hills—107-16 Continental Ave., at Queens Blvd. (261-7866) *Dangerous Beauty; Palmetto.*

Fresh Meadows—Eastbound Service Road, at 190th St. (777-FILM#619) *The Borrowers; Good Will Hunting; Great Expectations; Kissing a Fool; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Jackson Triplex—82nd St. at Roosevelt Ave. (478-6777) *Caught Up; Dark City; Titanic.*

Main Street Cinemas—72-66 Main St. (263-4828) *L. A. Confidential; The Borrowers; Kissing a Fool; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Midway—108-22 Queens Blvd., at 71st Ave., Forest Hills (261-8572) *Closed for renovations.*

Movieworld—242-02 61st Ave., off Exit 31, Douglaston (423-7200) *Kissing a Fool; Krippendorf's Tribe; Palmetto; Senseless; Sphere; Spice World; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

North Shore Towers—27-10 Grand Central Pkwy., Floral Park (229-7702) *Ma Vie en Rose; The Sweet Hereafter.*

Plaza —103-14 Roosevelt Ave., at 103rd St., Corona (639-0012) *Dark City; Titanic.*

The Movies at Bayside—38-39 Bell Blvd., at 39th Ave. (225-7711) *As Good As It Gets; The Full Monty; Kissing A Fool; Senseless; Titanic.*

Trylon—98-81 Queens Blvd., at 66th Ave., Rego Park (459-8944) *As Good As It Gets.*

Staten Island

Area Code 718

Atrium—680 Arthur Kill Rd., nr. Richmond Ave., Eltingville (317-8300) *L. A. Confidential; As Good As It Gets; The Borrowers; Dark City; Good Will Hunting; Krippendorf's Tribe; Palmetto; Sphere; Spice World; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Hylan Plaza—107 Mill Rd., at Hylan Blvd., New Dorp (351-0805) *The Apostle; Caught Up; The Full Monty; Senseless; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

The Movies at Staten Island—141 E. Service Rd., at Victory Blvd., Travis (983-9600) *L. A. Confidential; As Good As It Gets; The Borrowers; Dangerous Beauty; Dark City; Good Will Hunting; Hurricane Streets; Kissing a Fool; Krippendorf's Tribe; Palmetto; Senseless; Sphere; Titanic; The Wedding Singer.*

Museums, Societies, Etc.

American Museum of the Moving Image—"Young and Restless: A Richard Linklater Retrospective." 3/7-3/8: *It's Impossible to Learn to Plow by Reading Books* (1986-88) and *Slacker* (1991). 3/8: *Before Sunrise* (1995). 36-01 35th Ave., Astoria, Queens (718-784-0077); $12-$15 nonmembers; $8-$10 members; $4 ages 5-18.

Anthology Film Archives—"Karel Kachyna Retrospective." 3/1: *Suffering* (1961), *Vertigo* (1962), and *The Ear* (1970). 3/2-3/4: *Love Between the Raindrops* (1979): 3/2-3/3: *The High Wall* (1964). 3/4: *Death of the Beautiful Roebucks* (1979). 3/5: *Long Live the Republic* (1965). "Jean Renoir." 3/7-3/8: *Nana* (1926). "Gary Walkow." 3/6-3/10: *Notes From the Underground* (1996). "William Gazecki." 3/6-3/8: *Waco: The Rules of Engagement* (1996). 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5110); $7.

Cinema Village 12th St—"Dennis Nyback Presents." 3/9: Festival of Silent Animation. Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363). $8.

Different Light—3/8: *I'll Cry Tomorrow* (1955). 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850); free.

Donnell Media Center—"Featuring . . . Erich von Stroheim." 3/4: *The Man You Loved to Hate* (1979). 3/11: *Foolish Wives* (1922). 20 W. 53rd St. (621-0619); free.

Film Society of Lincoln Center (The Walter Reade Theater)—"Music for the Movies: Toru Takemitsu" 3/3-3/5 and 3/10-3/12: *Antonio Gaudi* (1985). 3/3: *Sharaku* (1995) and *Silence* (1971). 3/3-3/4: *Crazed Fruit* (1956). 3/4-3/5: *Harakiri/Seppuku* (1962). 3/5 and 3/10: *Ran* (1985). 3/10: *The Ceremony* (1971). 3/11-3/12: *Kwaidan* (1964). "Portrait of an Artist: Yo-Yo Ma." 3/6-3/8: Six one-hour films exploring J. S. Bach's suites for solo cello. "Independents Night." 3/12: *Brother Tied* (1997). Call 875-5601 for info. 65 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600); $8.50.

French Institute—3/3: "Films From Quebec." 3/10: *Le Magique* (1996). Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160); $7, $10 double feature.

Harlem Film Festival—3/13-3/14: "Harlem Film Festival: Visions of New Black Filmmakers." Aaron Davis Hall, West 135th St. and Convent Ave. (650-7148). Tickets $8 adults; $5 children.

Israel Film Festival—Through 3/12: "Fifty Years of Israeli Cinema." East Side Theatre, 919 Third Avenue (532-2075). Tickets $8.75.

Japan Society—"Literature to Film." 3/6: *The Crab Canning Ship* (1952). 333 E. 47th St. (752-3015); $7.50.

Museum of Jewish Heritage—3/4: *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer* (1954). Florence Gould Hall, French Institute, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160). Free.

New York University—"Colour Screens: Film and Video by African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain." 3/6: *New Visions.* Tisch School of the Arts; free.

Symphony Space—"The Envelope Please: 50 Years of Foreign Film and the Academy Awards." 3/3: *The Burmese Harp* (1956) and *The Tin Drum* (1979). 3/10: *Cinema Paradiso* (1989) and *Day For Night* (1973). 2537 Broadway, at 96th St. (864-5400); $8, $5 members.

The Screening Room—Sunday brunch: *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). 54 Varick St., below Canal St. (334-2100); $8 ($5 for Sunday brunch patrons).

YWCA Cine-Club—"A Celebration of Japanese Cinema." 3/7-3/8: *Drunken Angel* (1948). 610 Lexington Ave., at 53rd St. (735-9717); $5 members, $6 nonmembers.

Photograph courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics.

theater

A Flea in Her Ear...Kevin Bacon

Broadway

Previews and Openings

Ah, Wilderness!—Lincoln Center presents Eugene O'Neill's charming—and only—comedy, which the playwright described as "a capture of a mood, an evocation [of] the spirit of a time that is dead now with all its ideals and manners and codes." Debra Monk, Craig T. Nelson, and Sam Trammell star; Daniel Sullivan directs. $45–$55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 3/18 opening. *Vivian Beaumont Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (239-6200).*

Art—Three male friendships unravel because of an expensive painting. *(Ars longa, amicitia brevis).* Written by Yasmina Reza; Alan Alda, Alfred Molina, and Victor Garber star. $45–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 3/1 opening. *Royale Theatre, 242 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Cabaret—*Wilkommen!* Sam Mendes directs a revival of this eight-Tony-fabulous musical by Kander and Ebb. Natasha Richardson plays Sally Bowles; Alan Cumming plays the grinning emcee. Ron Rifkin and Mary Louise Wilson also star. $50–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. Cabaret, bar, and banquette seating available. In previews for a 3/19 opening. *Club Expo, 124 W. 43rd St. (719-1300).*

The Deep Blue Sea—Edward Herrmann and Blythe Danner, both of whom appeared on Broadway years ago in *The Philadelphia Story,* reunite for this Terence Rattigan drama about a woman who leaves her husband for a younger, less responsible man. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2. In previews for a 3/26 opening. *Roundabout Theatre Company Stage Right, 1530 Broadway, at 45th St. (719-1300).*

Paul McKenna's Hypnotic World—Under the spell of this British hypnotist, audience members ride imaginary horses, perform rock anthems, channel Martians, and otherwise humiliate themselves. $30. Mon. at 8 and Sun. at 7. Opens 3/8. *Roundabout Theatre, 1530 Broadway, at 45th St. (307-4100).*

The Sound of Music—Returns to Broadway for the first time since its 1959 premiere. Hum along; bring the kids. Rebecca Luker, who played a memorable Magnolia in *Show Boat,* plays the nun turned governess, and Michael Siberry plays the widower captain. $50–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. In previews for a 3/12 opening. *Martin Beck Theatre, 302 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Now Playing

Beauty and the Beast—A musical based on a movie based on a fairy tale. Setting box-office and, presumably, merchandising records even as we speak. Deborah Gibson plays the girl; Chuck Wagner plays the (hairy) boy. With Tony-award-winning costumes by Ann Hould-Ward; lyrics by Tim Rice and Howard Ashman; music by Alan Menken. $22.50–$70. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. Opened: 4/18/94. *Palace Theatre, 1564 Broadway, at 47th St. (307-4100). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

Bring In 'da Noise, Bring In 'da Funk—George C. Wolfe and Savion Glover's Tony-winning history of African Americans as told through tap dancing, poetry, and song. $20–$70. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs.*

The Capeman—Paul Simon's painstakingly crafted and vigorously ballyhooed new musical finally arrives. The score—a mix of salsa, rock, doo-wop, and gospel tunes—features more than 30 songs; the story, based on one of the most sensational double murders in New York history, is one of redemption, following Salvador Agron, the perp, for more than 30 years of his uncommon life, as he metamorphoses from gang tough to jailhouse poet. Book by Nobel Prize–winning poet Derek Walcott, direction and choreography by Mark Morris, and star turns by Ruben Blades and Marc Anthony. $50–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened 1/29/98. *Marquis Theater, 211 W. 45th St. (307-4100).*

Cats—Now and for the foreseeable future. By Andrew Lloyd Webber, of course, with an assist from T. S. Eliot. $37.50–$65. Mon. and Tues. at 8, Wed. at 2 and 8, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3. Opened: 10/7/82. *Winter Garden Theater, 1634 Broadway, at 50th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

Chicago—It was a gamble to transfer the Encores! production of *Chicago* to Broadway, but since *Chicago* is about women who kill their men and the mercenary lawyer who gets them off, gambling seems like the merest peccadillo. Especially when, as here, it pays off. Bebe Neuwirth does a scissors kick or two while maintaining her come-hither brand of snootiness; minimalism prevails. If Chicago in the twenties was like this, it was more fun than Periclean Athens. Also starring Marilu Henner, Hinton Battle, and Ernie Sabella. (Simon: 12/2/96.) $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/14/96. *Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

The Diary of Anne Frank—Natalie Portman, the electrifying teen cutie from *Beautiful Girls,* stars in this newly adapted version of the 1955 play. Also starring Linda Lavin, Harris Yulin, George Hearn, and Austin Pendleton. $40–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 12/4/97. *Music Box Theater, 239 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Forever Tango—Or at least for a couple of hours: This marathon of tango dancing, as interpreted by Luis Bravo, is a testament to the sultry versatility of the Argentine form, not to mention its power to seduce. $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Walter Kerr Theater, 218 W. 48th St. (239-6200).*

Freak—John Leguizamo has proved, in various mediums and genres, that he is versatile, witty, inventive, and charming. He writes and delivers funny dialogue within his monologues, interrupts his acting to execute nimble dance steps both elegant and satirical, and creates characters with facial expressions, vocal mannerisms, and body language that blend into a riotous lingua franca. He brings these skills to this Broadway show, which purports to be semi-autobiographical and is surely, in Anatole France's great phrase, a story truer than truth. (Simon: 3/2/98.) $17.50–$55. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3. *Cort Theatre, 138 W. 48th St. (239-6200).*

Jekyll & Hyde—Man turns into beastly man, all in the name of science. Book and lyrics by Leslie Bricusse, music by Frank Wildhorn. $45–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8; Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 4/28/97. *Plymouth Theatre, 236 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

The Last Night of Ballyhoo—This romantic comedy, set in 1939 Atlanta on the eve of the premiere of *Gone With the Wind,* is Alfred Uhry's first effort since *Driving Miss Daisy.* The wait clearly paid off; he won the 1997 Tony award for Best Play. $55. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 2/27/97. *Helen Hayes Theatre, 240 W. 44th St. (307-4100).*

Les Misérables—The implacable Inspector Javert hounding the innocent ex-convict Jean Valjean; the pathetic Fantine, wronged by the entire world, dying as she entrusts her daughter, Cosette, to the now-prosperous Mayor Valjean; the dastardly Thénardiers bringing up Cosette as a scullion while cosseting their own daughter, Eponine—what a story! Just synopsizing the plot brings tears to the iciest eyes. (Simon: 3/31/97.) $15–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened: 3/12/87. *Imperial Theater, 249 W. 45th St. (239-6200). 3 hrs. 15 mins.*

The Life—A contemporary street opera set in eighties Times Square. Lillias White and Chuck Cooper just picked up Tony awards for their performances. Music and lyrics by Cy Coleman and Ira Gasman; book by Coleman, Gasman, and David Newman. $40–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened 4/26/97. *Ethel Barrymore Theatre, 243 W. 47th St. (239-6200).*

The Lion King—This spectacle rightfully earns that

Opening

Chloë the Teenage Witch

A new girl arrives at a midwestern junior high, comes between two lesbian lovers, and suffers the retribution of a teen sorceress. In the hands of a less capable theater company, this tale—based on actual events!—would probably be lurid and junky; in the hands of the very fine New Group (and Chloë Sevigny, an anti-ingenue if ever there was one), *Hazelwood Jr. High* should be all that and more. The site-specific production opens at Intermediate School 70 on March 5.

Photograph by Carol Rosegg.

most abused of epithets: *magical*. Kiddies will delightedly swallow it whole, unless they are tiny and flappable. But this is the one such show adults will feast on, too, mostly because of the wonders wrought by Julie Taymor, who designed and directed this cornucopia of dazzlements. Puppetry from East and West is put to superlative use, yet the actors, singers, and dancers are accorded enough humanity to ply their anthropomorphic skills. And Taymor has found ways to transmute the strictly cartoonish bravura of the big-screen Lion King onto a stage so that nothing is lost in translation. (Simon: 12/1/97). $20–$80. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 1 and 6:30. *New Amsterdam Theater, 214 W. 42nd St. (307-4100).*

Opening Flea Circus

Bill Irwin, who proved himself a first-class interpreter of French farce in the Roundabout production of 'Scapin' last year, now brings his directorial energies to 'A Flea in Her Ear,' Feydeau's 1907 comedy about the misadventures of a suspicious wife. Opens March 5 at the Roundabout.

Miss Saigon—This reworking of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*, set in Vietnam during the fall of Saigon, is now one of Broadway's ten longest-running musicals. Music by Claude-Michel Schonberg; lyrics by Alain Boublil and Richard Maltby Jr.; directed by Nicholas Hytner. $15–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 4/11/91. *Broadway Theater, 1681 Broadway, at 53rd St. (239-6200).*

The Old Neighborhood—Three interconnected one-act plays by David Mamet, starring Peter Riegert, Patti LuPone, Vincent Guastaferro, Mary McCann, and Jack Willis. $45–$55. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened 11/19/97. *Booth Theatre, 222 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

The Phantom of the Opera—Nine leads, ten years, $357 million, and almost 7 million theatergoers later, Andrew Lloyd Webber's blockbuster continues to pack them in. $15–$75. Mon.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 1/26/88. *Majestic Theater, 247 W. 44th St. (239-6200). 2 hrs. 30 mins.*

Ragtime—A musical based on E. L. Doctorow's historical novel, with a book by Terrence McNally and music by the composer-lyricist team of Stephen Flaherty and Lynn Ahrens. The epic, neatly trimmed and tidied for the stage, braids the fates of three fictitious families—one black, one Jewish, one Wasp—and an assortment of historical characters. $31–$125. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 1/18/97. *Ford Center for the Performing Arts, 213 W. 42nd St. (307-4100).*

Rent—The late Jonathan Larson's reimagining of Puccini's *La Bohème* as it might be lived by a gaggle of contemporary sick and hip types living in the East Village. $30–$67.50. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 7. *Nederlander Theater, 208 W. 41st St. (307-4100). 2 hrs. 45 mins.*

The Scarlet Pimpernel—You've seen the billboard. Now come see the show. It's got romance, suspense, swashbuckling, and a whole bunch of eighteenth-century stuff; if it succeeds, Broadway could well be on its way to becoming a French Revolution theme park. Pop composer Frank Wildhorn (*Jekyll & Hyde*) did the score. Christine Andreas, Terrence Mann, and Douglas Sills star. $20–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 11/9/97. *Minskoff Theatre, 200 W. 45th St. (307-4100).*

1776—The book of this 1969 musical, the gifted Peter Stone's masterpiece, is surely one of the best ever. Thrillingly incorporating the potentially divisive issue of slavery, it succeeds in keeping us, despite our knowledge of the outcome, in a state of wonderfully paradoxical suspense. Splendid as was Peter Hunt's original production, this Scott Ellis revival very nearly matches it. It will provide you not only with three hours of choice theatergoing, but also with three very rich hours of life. Music and lyrics by Sherman Edwards. (Simon: 8/25/97.) $20–$75. Wed.–Sat. at 8; Wed. and Sat. at 2; Sun. at 1 and 6:30. *Gershwin Theatre, 222 W. 51st St. (307-4100).*

Smokey Joe's Cafe: The Songs of Leiber and Stoller—They say the neon lights are bright on Broadway, and when this show—drawn from the songbook Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller wrote to accompany the American baby-boomer childhood experience—breezes into New York City, people gonna scrape and bow. A tip, tip, tip, young blood: Buy yourself a ticket, sit down in the very first row. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. $65–$75. *At the Virginia Theatre, 245 W. 52nd St. (239-6200)?* Uh-huh. *2 hrs. 10 mins.*

The Sunshine Boys—This Neil Simon play is a triumph of strategy. (1) It is full of one-liners: easily detachable and portable laughs. (2) The main characters, a retired vaudeville team, now hate each other, hence ever-popular insult comedy. (3) Willie Clark and Al Lewis are also Jewish, so we get audience-tickling Jewish jokes. (4) The background is show business, providing cherished showbiz humor. (5) A play about old croakers will capture Broadway's senescent regulars. (6) Big Apple–vs.–New Jersey jests draw in the trans-Hudsonians. (7) As ex-vaudevillians, Willie and Al generate nostalgia for a vanished world. Add the stage-screen-and-TV-enshrined duo of Jack Klugman (Willie) and Tony Randall (Al), and it's platinum-edged-securities time. This production at the National Actors Theatre revival is rattling good fun. (Simon: 1/5/98.) $30–$60. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 12/8/97. *Lyceum Theatre, 149 W. 45th St. (239-6200).*

Titanic—What it lacks in suspense it makes up for in Tony awards (five, in 1997, including Best Musical). Music and lyrics by Maury Yeston; book by Peter Stone. Directed by Richard Jones. $45–$75. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 4/23/97. *Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, 205 W. 46th St. (307-4100).*

Off Broadway

Previews and Openings

Amazing Grace—Marsha Mason stars as a condemned murderer awaiting her execution. Written by Pulitzer Prize–winner Michael Cristofer (*The Shadow Box*); presented by Blue Light Theater Company. $37.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3. In previews for a 3/15 opening at 7. *Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. (239-6200).*

Ground Rules:

Except where noted, Broadway shows begin at 8 and are dark Monday. Wallet-watchers should keep in mind the TKTS booths, where half-price tickets are available (for that day's performance only) to many Broadway and Off Broadway shows. TKTS booths are at Broadway and 47th St. and 2 World Trade Center, mezzanine level; call 212-768-1818 for more info. Involved in a production and want to submit details for a possible listing? Call 212-508-0740.

BAFO (Best and Final Offer)—A dark comedy about the havoc downsizing wreaks on the white male psyche. Written by Tom Strelich; directed by Robert Kalfin. $37.50 Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 2:30 and 7. In previews for a 3/8 opening: *American Place Theatre, 111 W. 46th St. (239-6200).*

The Emperor Jones—The Wooster Group revives its 1995 production of Eugene O'Neill's expressionist play, with Willem Dafoe and Kate Valk reprising their old roles. $20. Wed.–Sun. at 8. Previews begin 3/4 for a 3/11 opening. *The Peforming Garage, 33 Wooster Street (966-3651).*

A Flea in Her Ear—Bill Irwin, who proved himself a first-class interpreter of French farce in the Roundabout production of *Scapin* two years ago, now brings his directorial energies to bear on this 1907 Feydeau comedy about the misadventures of a suspicious wife. Mark Linn-Baker, last seen on his way to the forum, stars. $50. Tues.–Sat. at 7:30, Wed., Sat., and Sun. at 2:30. In previews for a 3/5 opening. *Roundabout's Laura Pels Theatre, 1530 Broadway, at 45th St. (719-1300).*

Hazelwood Jr. High—A new girl arrives at her mid-western junior high, comes between two lesbian lovers, and suffers a tabloid-perfect fate. In the hands of a less capable theater company, this tale—based on actual events!—would probably be lurid and junky; in the hands of the very fine New Group (and Chloë Sevigny, an anti-ingenue if ever there was one), this site-specific production should be all that and more. $15–$30. Mon.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 4 and 8. In previews for a 3/5 opening. *Intermediate School 70, 333 W. 17th St. (279-4200).*

Hot Klezmer—A brief (and tuneful) history of Klezmer. Presented by the American Jewish Theatre. $37.50. Schedule varies. Previews begin 3/7 for a 3/19 opening. *Raymond J. Greenwald Theatre, 307 E. 26th St. (633-9797).*

Macbeth—Is that a dagger Alec Baldwin sees before him? Or is it Angela Bassett, sharpening her nails? Or George C. Wolfe, shouting stage directions? $40. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 2. In previews for a 3/12 opening. *The Public Theater's Martinson Hall, 425 Lafayette St. (239-6200).*

Mystery School—Tyne Daly plays five women, all of whom hunger for a rich spiritual life. Written by Paul Selig; presented by En Garde Arts and Long Wharf Theatre. $32.50–$35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. In previews for a 3/11 opening. *Angel Orensanz Foundation Center for the Arts, 172 Norfolk St. (239-6200).*

Side Man—Warren Leight, the son of an itinerant trumpet player, wrote this drama as a means of both reproaching and honoring his father, whose never-ending quest for big-band work left the family untended for long stretches at a time. Gene, the play's protagonist, is also a trumpet player, and his long weeks on the road ultimately drive his loved ones away. Michael Mayer directs, fresh from his acclaimed revival of *A View From the Bridge*. $20. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 5. Previews begin 3/3 for a 3/11 opening. *Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. (279-4200).*

Stalking the Nightmare—A comedy based on the stories of Harlan Ellison, the best-selling fantasist and writer for the original *Star Trek* series. $12. Fri. and Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3, Mon. at 8. Previews begin 3/6 for a 3/9 opening. *West End Theatre, 263 W. 86th St. (582-0241).*

Tallulah's Party—Tovah Feldshuh stars in a musical about the celebrity's life—and who's more Tallulah than Tovah? Music by Arthur Siegel, lyrics by Mae Richard, book by Bob Griffiths. $45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 6. In previews for a 3/8 opening. *Homefront Theatre, 236 W. 54th St. (581-5866).*

The Top of the Bottom Half—Performance artist Liza Vann covers a broad range of topics, most notably her battle with breast cancer and popular misconceptions about the disease. Engagement lasts one week only. $20–$22.50. Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 2:30. *Theatre at Saint Peter's Church, Citicorp Center, 619 Lexington Ave., at 54th St. (935-5820).*

Photograph by Joan Marcus.

Now Playing

As Bees in Honey Drown—Socialite Alexa Vere de Vere—one part Hepburn, two parts eyeliner, three parts luxury addict—enlists a young author to write a screenplay about her life. Written by Douglas Carter Beane; alertly directed by Mark Brokaw (*How I Learned to Drive*). Starring Bo Foxworth and J. Smith-Cameron. $47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 6 and 9, Sun. at 3 and 7. *Lucille Lortel Theatre, 121 Christopher St. (239-6200).*

The Beauty Queen of Leenane—Martin McDonagh, the Anglo-Irish playwright with the precociously long résumé, makes his American debut with this drama about an old woman's attempts to sabotage her daughter's love life. The play was one of four by McDonagh (now all of 27) to run simultaneously in London last season. $35–$40. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. *Atlantic Theater Company, 336 W. 20th St. (239-6200).*

Benita Canova—Struck by Balthus's erotic depictions of little girls, Richard Foreman responded with this, his own metaphysical portrait of sex and violence among the nubile. $15. Tues. and Thurs.–Sun. at 8. Through 4/5. *Ontological Theatre at St. Marks, 131 10th St. (533-4650).*

Black Humor—Lewis Black peddles his brand of shrewd, informed political comedy without, amazingly, invoking Bill Clinton's weakness for Big Macs or Al Gore's resemblance to plywood. $30–$35. Tues—Fri. at 8, Sat. at 8 and 10:30, and Sun. at 7. Through 3/29. *Cherry Lane Theatre, 38 Commerce St. (239-6200).*

Blue Man Group: Tubes—Smart silliness, with toilet paper, neon-colored paint, cereal, etc. Wildly inventive, and appropriate for just about everyone—kids, adults, foreigners, haters and lovers of performance art. $39–$49. Tues., Wed., Thurs. at 8, Fri. and Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 4 and 7. Opened: 11/17/91. *Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. (254-4370).*

Previews

Brassed Off

Warren Leight, the son of an itinerant trumpet player, wrote *Side Man* as a means of both reproaching and honoring his father, whose never-ending quest for big-band work left the family untended for long stretches at a time. Gene, the play's protagonist, is also a trumpet player, and his long weeks on the road ultimately drive his loved ones away. Michael Mayer directs, fresh from his acclaimed revival of *A View From the Bridge*. Previews begin March 3 at the Classic Stage Company.

Photograph by Carol Rosegg.

The Broadway Kids Sing Broadway—A musical revue of songs made famous by Broadway kids. Expect tunes from *Annie, The Sound of Music, Oliver!,* and *Bye Bye Birdie.* $20. Sat. and Sun. at noon. John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (354-2220).

Christopher Columbus—The first of a multiculturally diverse series called *3 by 3.* Written by Nikos Kazantzakis; directed by Tony Award winner Lloyd Richards. $20. Wed.–Fri. at 7:30, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3. Through 3/22. *Harry De Jur Playhouse, 466 Grand Street (353-1176).*

Eyes For Consuela—Under Terry Kinney's highly kinetic direction, this new Sam Shepard play is as adhesive as a burr, as headstrong as a burro, and as savory as a burrito. Where else would we encounter a Mexican bandit with a double family life—one on each side of the Rio Grande—who indulges in sociophilosophical dialectics with his captive gringo? As the two men made kin by marital problems, David Strathairn (Henry) is as splendid as usual, and Daniel Faraldo (Amado), new to me, a wonderful surprise. (Simon: 3/2/98.) $35. Tues.–Sun. at 7:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. *Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212).*

Fantasticks—The musical perennial that, happily, refuses to go away. $35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 7, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Opened: 5/3/60. *Sullivan St. Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St. (674-3838).*

Forbidden Broadway Strikes Back!—Some titles say it all, and Gerard Alessandrini's newest update of his long-running musical spoof poking fun at the assorted absurdities of the Great White Way couldn't arrive in town at a more—well, let's be kind and say propitious time. $40–$45. Mon., Wed.–Fri. at 8:15, Sat. at 2:30 and 8:15, Sun. at 3:30 and 7:30; food and drink available/optional. *Stardust Theatre, Broadway at 51st St. (239-6200).*

Grandma Sylvia's Funeral—An audience-participation comedy akin to *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding,* written by Glenn Wein and Amy Lord Blumsack. When Grandma Sylvia dies, a power struggle ensues among family members. $37.50–$57.50, which includes a mitzvah meal. Opened: 10/9/94. Wed. at 2 and 7:30, Thurs. at 7:30, Fri. at 8, Sat. at 5 and 9, Sun. at 1 and 5. *Soho Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. (691-1555).*

Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde—From letters, biographies, and court transcripts, writer-director Moisés Kaufman has put together an absorbing show about Oscar Wilde's 1895 trial for "gross indecency with male persons." $20–$47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, and Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 6/5/97. *Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane (307-4100).*

Hedwig and the Angry Inch—John Cameron Mitchell—actor, director, and founding member of the Drama Dept.—wrote and stars in this rock concert–cum–musical, in which a German war bride finds herself in a Kansas trailer park and achieves self-actualization, not to mention tabloid fame, through songwriting. Featuring Stephen Trask and his downtown band, Cheater. $35. Mon at 8, Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 7. Opened 2/14/98. *Jane Street Theatre at the Hotel Riverview Ballroom, 113 Jane St. (239-6200).*

How I Learned to Drive—Paula Vogel's play benefits from an original slant: child molestation as an act of consenting partners, with the child as a willing participant. Miss Vogel has written a memory play about a pedophile and his big-breasted niece by marriage, Uncle Peck and Li'l Bit, names a trifle too apt to ring true. The driving lessons Uncle Peck gives Li'l Bit over the years are a slow, careful—even caring—seduction. Mark Brokaw has directed inventively. (Simon: 3/31/97). Now starring Deirdre Lovejoy and Cotter Smith. $45–$47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, and Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened 3/16/97. *Century Theater, 111 E. 15 St. (239-6200).*

Howard Crabtree's When Pigs Fly—An irrepressible, technicolor celebration of puns, fabric, and gay life. Its costumer and musical "conceiver," Howard Crabtree, died in June of 1996, just days after completing the revue. $45. Mon., Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 2 and 5. *Douglas Fairbanks Theater, 432 W. 42nd St. (239-6200).*

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change—It's a daring innovation, perhaps, but this musical revue about what, in the context of most contemporary musicals, seems an amusingly quaint subject these days—heterosexual love—has bravely decided to buck the trend. $47.50–$50. Mon. and Tues at 8, Wed. at 2:30 and 8, Fri at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 3. *Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (239-6200).*

I Will Come Back—A new musical celebrating Judy Garland's life. Written and directed by Timothy Gray, an associate of the diva; starring Tommy Femia, a cabaret performer who's made a healthy living out of impersonating her. $45. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. *Players Theatre, 115 MacDougal St. (239-6200).*

Joseph Gabriel Magic—Magician Joseph Gabriel mixes sleights of hand with large-scale illusions. $25–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. *Lamb's Theatre, 130 W. 44th St. (239-6200).*

June Moon—A revival of a revival. Last year, the Drama Dept. brought back this 1929 comedy by Ring Lardner and George S. Kaufman to great acclaim; this winter, the story of the Tin Pan Alley songwriter who falls for a big-city sophisticate comes roaring back, after a bit of tweaking at the McCarter Theatre. Directed by Mark Nelson. $20–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 3. Opened 1/15/97. *Variety Arts Theatre, 110 Third Ave., bet. 13th and 14th Sts. (239-6200).*

Late Nite Catechism—Maripat Donovan as a parochial-school-teaching nun backed by a magisterium of unassailable moral authority and some mean wrist action with a ruler. $35. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2, Sun. at 2 and 5. *St. Luke's Church Annex, 308 W. 46th St. (239-6200).*

The Maiden's Prayer—A new comedy from Nicky Silver *(Pterodactyls, Raised in Captivity)* about five adults interconnected through blood, friendship, marriage, and less meaningful unions. Starring Joanna Going, Patricia Clarkson, Daniel Jenkins, Geoffrey Naufts and Christopher C. Fuller. $35. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. *Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. (353-3874).*

Mindgames—Marc Salem, a mentalist and former director of research for *Sesame Street,* does a slew of fancy math tricks, stops his own pulse, and predicts the contents of people's wallets. $40. Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2, 7, and 10, Sun. at 3 and 7. *Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. (239-6200).*

Mizlansky/Zilinsky or "Schmucks"—A new comedy from John Robin Baitz about a pair of Hollywood hustlers' last-ditch effort to seal a deal. Nathan Lane, fresh from Hollywood, where he evaded mice and other vermin, plays one of the two title schmucks; Joe Mantello, the talented young actor who directed Neil Simon's *Proposals,* directs here, too. $47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 2:30 and 7. *Manhattan Theatre Club, 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212).*

Murdered by the Mob—When this family gets together, it's murder. *Heh heh heh.* One of two interactive mob comedies now running Off Broadway; a four-course meal is included, plus take-home gifts and fake Academy Awards to the audience's best actors. $55. Fri. at 7:30 and Sat. at 7. *Steak Brokers Club, 393 Eighth Ave., bet. 29th and 30th Sts. (1-800-MURDERINC).*

My One Good Nerve—Ruby Dee's one-woman show based on her book by the same name. $20. Wed. at 3 and 8, Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 6. Through 3/8. *Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, 68 St., at Lexington Ave. (772-4448).*

Never the Sinner—The sensational story of Leopold and Loeb—two wealthy, well-educated teenagers who in 1924 murdered a young boy on a whim—moves from the American Jewish Theatre, where it played to great acclaim earlier this season, to a home further uptown. $25–$45. Mon. at 8, Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2:30 and 8, Sun. at 3. *John Houseman Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (239-6200).*

Perfect Crime—Warren Manzi's long-running thriller about a wealthy psychiatrist accused of murdering

Photograph by Valerie Brea Ross.

Onstage

West Side Stories

Despite battles with insolvency and the remoteness of its Eleventh Avenue location, Ensemble Studio Theatre has managed to nurture some of the country's finest stage talents. In a marathon of 'E.S.T. Classics' beginning March 3, veterans of the 27-year-old institution (including Bob Balaban, Lois Smith, Harris Yulin, and Kyra Sedgwick) will gather to read from works first produced there (including Arthur Miller's 'The Last Yankee,' Michael Brady's 'To Gillian on Her 37th Birthday,' and Christopher Durang's 'Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You'). The lucky few who attend the March 20 performance will experience no degree of separation between themselves and Kevin Bacon, who appears that evening. For tickets ($10) and program listings, call 247-4982. Performances run through March 22.

her husband, and the small-town detective who tries to prove she committed the "perfect crime." $35. Mon. and Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 3 and 7, Wed. and Sat. at 2. Opened: 4/5/87. *Duffy Theatre, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. (695-3401).*

Pride's Crossing—One of our subtlest playwrights (Tina Howe) and one of our most incisive performers (Cherry Jones) have combined talents to give us this delicate, minor-key memory play. It rehearses the life of Mabel Tidings Bigelow from 10 to 90 in seemingly random order, the way reality and remembrance play hopscotch with each other. Mabel is a quirky, headstrong, despotic nonagenarian, a New England matriarch whose high point was being the first woman to swim the English Channel the harder way, from England to France. Cherry Jones has to be seen to be believed—if then. Without aid from makeup, she roams fast and free across the decades, embodying all ages and conditions through the sheer power of acting. (Simon: 12/22/97.) $50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Through 4/5. *Lincoln Center's Mitzi E. Newhouse Theater, 150 W. 65th St. (239-6200).*

R & J—A four-man, prop-free version of *Romeo and Juliet.* $40. Wed.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 3 and 8, Sun. at 3 and 7. *John Houseman Studio Theatre, 450 W. 42nd St. (354-2220).*

Revenge in the Mob—The inevitable offspring of interactive comedies *Grandma Sylvia's Funeral* and *Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding.* A four-course meal is included, so we'll assume the carnage isn't graphic. $60. Fri. and Sat. at 8. *Arno Ristorante, 141 W. 38th St. (1-888-MOB-BOYS).*

Richard II—The season's *Richard* renaissance continues apace with this production by the Pearl Theatre Company. $18–$30. Tues. and Thurs.–Sat. at 8, Wed., Sat. and Sun. at 2. *Pearl Theatre Company, 80 St. Mark's Pl. (598-9802).*

Richard II and Richard III—Are presented in rotating repertory by the always estimable Theater for a New Audience. A company of eighteen actors plays 60 roles; Ron Daniels directs. $37.50 per *Richard.* Schedule varies. *Through 4/5. Playhouse at St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. (279-4200).*

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—This is a repeat engagement from the actor-prestidigitator, who in 1994 first presented crowds with this strange evening of card tricks. Some you've seen before—like the three-card monte—and some you surely haven't; he makes cards levitate, for example, and cuts them in midair with scissors. David Mamet, long fascinated by the power of the scam and human gullibility, directed. $55. Wed.–Sat. at 8, Sun. at 7. Through 3/29. *Second Stage Theatre, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (787-3471).*

Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know—There is a decent amount of merriment to be had from this revue. Inspired—or incited—by a homonymous travel guide, this show by a number of hands pokes fun at every aspect of travel, from the hopeless phone calls for airline reservations to the joys of sandy Uzbekistan, from lost baggage to lost illusions, from Hertz to other hurts and frustrations. Nothing is overlooked, though some things are a mite undercooked. Even the Ca*th*tilian li*th*p ge*th* a tuneful *th*ong tribute. (Simon: 12/15/97.) $42.50–$47.50; optional dinner one hour before curtain. Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Fri. at 8, Sat. and Sun. at 3 and 7:30. Opened 10/30/97. *Triad Theatre, 158 W. 72nd St. (799-4599).*

Shopping and Fucking—And how these two pursuits intersect in the lives of five young Londoners. The play, by newcomer Mark Ravenhill, was a sensation last year in the West End; it opens here with a homegrown cast. $35. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10, Sun. at 3. Through 3/29. *New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. (460-5475).*

Stomp—As the title implies, a loud, aggressive, and energetic show in which a troupe of performers dances, claps, and generally bangs on everything in sight. Featuring buckets, brooms, trash-can lids, and, yes, the kitchen sink. $24.50–$47.50. Tues.–Fri. at 8, Sat. at 7 and 10:30, Sun. at 3 and 7. Opened: 2/27/94. *Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., bet. 7th and 8th Sts. (477-2477).*

That's Life!—A musical revue about Jewish family life. $25. Fri. at 8, Sat. at 2 and 8, Sun. at 2. *Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. (838-9090).*

Tony 'n' Tina's Wedding—A wedding at *St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St.,* then a reception at *Vinnie's, 147 Waverly Pl.,* with Italian buffet, champagne, and wedding cake. Wonderfully tacky—and it's lasted longer than a lot of real marriages. $65–$75. Tues.–Sun. at 7, Sat. and Sun. at 2. Opened: 2/6/88. *(239-6200).*

Two Pianos, Four Hands—Ted Dykstra and Richard Greenblatt, a pair of talented pianists who never made it to the recital halls, wax philosophical about pushy parents and smug concert judges. $40–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. at 2:30, Sat. and Sun. at 3. Opened 10/30/97. *Promenade Theater, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (239-6200).*

Visiting Mr. Green—Eli Wallach, who made his Broadway debut more than a half-century ago, stars in this new comedy about a relationship between a young man and an older Jewish widower. $35–$45. Tues.–Sat. at 8, Wed. and Sat. at 2:30, Sun. at 3. *Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. (505-0700).*

Davis and Keil *continued from page 43*

appearances. Alison and Carlos surfaced at Doubles earlier this month at a benefit for Sagaponack neighbor and artist Robert Dash's Maddoo Conservancy; they spent Valentine's Day with another couple at Sagaponack's Alison on the Beach.

On the advice of his attorneys, Gomez has declined to discuss the case, but reached by *New York* last week, he admitted that the strain of recent events had begun to affect him. "It's unfortunate that people gloat at the misfortunes of others and jump to conclusions," he said. "It's a time when you find out who your friends really are." Spear has also been spotted solo, at Palio's, at the Cooper-Hewitt for a lecture by her sister, Laurinda, and at a cocktail party thrown by Upper East Side fixture Mark Gilbertson. Some of her circle have been shocked by Spear's insouciance. "She was at that cocktail party last week running around like everything's fine," says one. "Surely there's someone she could have been home comforting, or at least she could have been on the phone with her mother."

As for Platt, he now lives in New York and Southampton with a Malaysian princess named Zarina. He claims that the only dealings he has with his ex-wife concern their son, who by all accounts is very attached to Gomez. "I know very little about their life. Occasionally, when I glance through magazines, I see pictures of them at parties, and it looks like they are having fun," says Platt. "Recently, when I went to pick up Jeremy in Sagaponack, Carlos got in the car with me and said he was sorry Jeremy was involved in this, but he couldn't answer any questions about the situation because legally he wasn't allowed to discuss it. I only know what I read in the papers because nobody else is telling me anything." As for Jeremy's future? "We'll see what happens with these charges," says Platt.

For now, the couple's situation remains grim. Gomez's legal strategy is still unclear, but his lawyer, Stanley Arkin, says, "He's a very nice young man, and we're looking to do the best for him that we can." Gomez's former employer has indicated that they are close to some kind of settlement of the civil suit. "We believe that we will recover all the funds that he misappropriated," says Jack Morris of Citibank. They haven't paid their taxes on their house in Sagaponack, and at least some if not all of their assets will have to go, but typically, Spear has not let the situation get her down. Two weeks ago, she fired off a letter for the New Museum Gala, which she co-chairs. Pointedly, it was signed not Alison Gomez but Alison Spear. ■

art

Paul Strand...Robert Grosvenor

Openings

Sanford Smith's annual **WORKS ON PAPER** show returns to the Park Avenue Armory March 5–8; 67th Street and Park Ave.; Thurs. and Fri. 11–8, Sat. 11–7, Sun. 12–7.

Galleries

Solos

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

Stuart Arends—Small-scale minimal paintings on boxlike supports; through 3/28. Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St. (734-3600).

Reynolds Beal—Paintings of harbor scenes and towns along America's East Coast, executed between the 1890s and the 1940s; through 3/21. Beacon Hill, 980 Madison Ave., bet. 76th and 77th Sts. (734-3636).

Carol Diehl—Recent paintings depicting dense configurations of numbers, words, and symbols; through 3/14. Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St. (535-8810).

Jean Fautrier—Paintings that depict still life and nudes set in a looming color space, by this seminal French artist (1898–1964) whose works were admired by Mark Rothko; through 4/11. Werner, 21 E. 67th St. (988-1623).

Sam Francis—Biomorphic abstract paintings produced early in the artist's career, between 1959 and 1961, when he was preoccupied almost exclusively with the exploration of blue; through 3/31. Gray, 1018 Madison Ave. (472-8787).

Giambologna—Bronze, terra-cotta, and marble sculptures by the Mannerist sculptor (1529–1608) who worked in Florence for the Medici family, from the collection of Michael Hall; 3/6–4/4. Salander O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. (879-6606).

Lester Johnson—Recent paintings based on sketches made by the artist during the summer in southern France and in East Hampton, 3/4–4/4, at Rickards, 1045 Madison Ave. (924-0858) and 3/4–4/11, at Cadé, 1045 Madison Ave. (734-3670).

Sherry Kerlin—Oil and ink drawings based on photographs; 3/4–4/11. Winston Wächter, 39 E. 78th St. (327-2526).

Félicien Rops—Drawings for prints by this artist (1833–1898) who illustrated books by Baudelaire, Maupassant, and other writers; through 4/25. Shepherd, 21 E. 84th St. (861-4050).

Peter Schroth—Intimate landscape views in oil on wood; through 3/28. Baumgold, 128 E. 72nd St. (861-7338).

Hedda Sterne—A selection of abstract paintings and drawings from 1960 to the present; through 3/28. CDS, 76 E. 79th St. (772-9555).

57th Street Area

Leigh Behnke—Recent paintings and watercolors that depict multiple and repetitive images of landscape, cityscape, still life, and interior views; 3/5–28. Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (759-2345).

Theresa Bernstein—A survey of figurative paintings by this 108-year-old artist who was a member of the Philadelphia Ten, a group of women artists that formed in 1917 in response to the male-dominated Eight, later called the Ashcan School; through 4/18. Whalen, 24 W. 57th St. (397-9700).

David Bierk—Paintings of landscapes and still lifes that refer to works by old masters and nineteenth-century American artists; through 3/21. American Associated Artists, 20 W. 57th St. (399-5510).

Kathryn Freeman—Paintings of allegorical interiors with figures; through 3/31. Tatischeff, 50 W. 57th St. (664-0907).

Morris Graves—Paintings that depict emblematic images of the moon, serpents, birds, and vessels; through 3/28. Schmidt-Bingham, 41 E. 57th St. (888-1122).

Donald Judd—Early fabricated works; through 3/21. Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. (421-3292).

Ellsworth Kelly—Black-and-white prints; through 3/14. Sheehan, 20 W. 57th St. (489-3331).

Carl W. Peters—Impressionist landscape paintings of New York's Genesee Valley and the harbors of Cape Ann, Massachusetts; through 4/4. Spanierman, 45 E. 58th St. (832-0208).

Anne Truitt—Recent sculptures; through 3/21. Danese, 41 E. 57th St. (223-2227).

Paul Waldman—Recent paintings of figures in reductive landscapes; through 3/28. Helman, 20 W. 57th St. (245-2888).

Helen Miranda Wilson—New paintings that depict the sky from the perspective of looking upward; through 4/9. McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. (319-1996).

SoHo and TriBeCa

Michael Ashkin/Charlie White—New sculpture and photographs/A magazine pictorial installation titled *Dominatrix* that depicts the adventures of a she-demon. Through 3/21. Rosen, 130 Prince St. (941-0203).

Jill Baroff—An installation in which the grid pattern on the gallery's cement floor has been carved into its walls; through 3/21. Stark, 113 Crosby St. (925-4484).

Beverly Buchanan—Sculptures and drawings of shacks; through 3/21. Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St. (431-4224).

Diana Cooper/Anissa Mack—Obsessive doodle paintings/The artist's version of the Great Cardiff Giant, a twelve-foot-tall, 2,000-pound petrified man, first unearthed and exhibited in 1869. Through 3/21. Postmasters, 80 Greene St. (941-5711).

Herman de Vries—An installation, works on paper, and artists' books; through 3/28. Inglett, 100 Wooster St. (343-0573).

Ellen Gallagher—New paintings that incorporate a vocabulary of marks and symbols; 3/7–4/11. Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. (228-2828).

Jane Hammond/Radcliffe Bailey—Works on paper/Assemblages. Through 3/21. Beitzel, 102 Prince St. (219-2863).

Gillian Jagger—A monumental sculpture installation of stones and other objects from nature that has at its center a deer carcass the artist found on the road in upstate New York and then cast in clear resin; through 3/28. Kind, 136 Greene St. (925-1200).

Karlo Kacharava—Expressionistic drawings and paintings by this Georgian artist and art critic (1964–1994) who brought together Moscow and Tbilisi artistic circles; through 4/4. Goldstein, 39 Wooster St. (431-0314).

Jenifer Kobylarz—New paintings that depict motifs of spinelike organic forms; through 4/4. Thorp, 103 Prince St. (431-6880).

Barry Le Va/Lawrence Beck—Works on paper covering the years 1967–1998/Photographic works. Through 3/21. Sonnabend, 420 W. Broadway (966-6160).

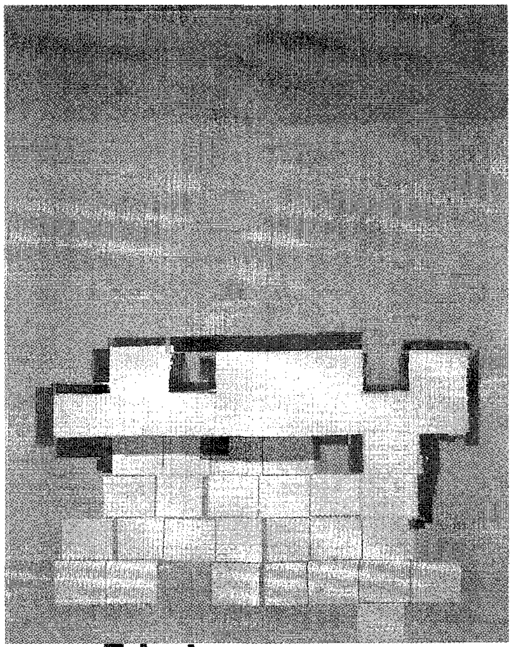
Lee Lozano—Monumental paintings of tools made after 1964, through 5/1, at Rosen & van Liere, 362 W. Broadway (925-5425), and later minimal paintings, through 3/14, at Roeder, 545 Broadway (925-6098).

Feng Mengbo—Paintings, CD-ROMS, and collages by a Beijing artist; through 3/21. Solomon, 172 Mercer St. (941-5777).

John L. Moore—Paintings of ellipsoid shapes hovering in color fields; 3/5–4/4. M-13, 72 Greene St. (925-3007).

Matt Mullican—Forty-three paintings generated from the taxonomy of a nineteenth-century encyclopedia, and a video and recent multiples; through 3/28. Alexander, 59 Wooster St. (925-4338).

Elizabeth Olbert—Painted freestanding objects and wall-mounted pieces that take New England as

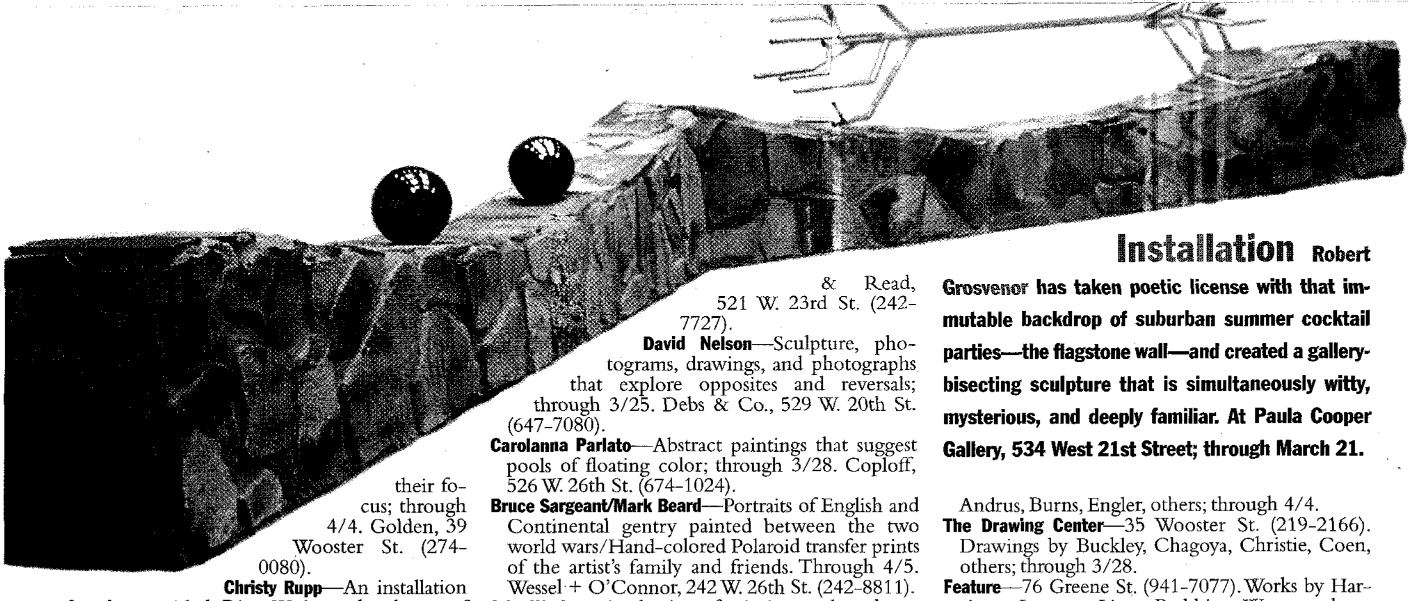


Talent

Hidden Messages

By introducing vibrant color to her latest paintings, Ellen Gallagher has heightened the contrast between the works' abstract minimalism and their intentionally provocative figurative counterparts: tiny, barely perceptible images of minstrel faces and other black stereotypes. At Gagosian Gallery, 136 Wooster Street; through April 11.

Photograph by Tom Powel, courtesy of the Gagosian Gallery.



Installation **Robert Grosvenor has taken poetic license with that immutable backdrop of suburban summer cocktail parties—the flagstone wall—and created a gallery-bisecting sculpture that is simultaneously witty, mysterious, and deeply familiar. At Paula Cooper Gallery, 534 West 21st Street; through March 21.**

their focus; through 4/4. Golden, 39 Wooster St. (274-0080).

- **Christy Rupp**—An installation of sculpture titled *Dirty Work* on the theme of viruses and bacteria; through 3/21. TZ'Art, 28 Wooster St. (966-9059).
- **Bonell Silverman**—Canvases that combine elements of expressionism and color-field painting, by a Houston-based artist; through 3/21. Steele, 420 W. (941-8388).
- **Rudolph Steiner**—Blackboard drawings that were the visual component to Steiner's lectures given between 1919 and 1924; through 3/21. Blum, 99 Wooster St. (343-0441).
- **Richard Tuttle**—New mixed-media wall pieces that continue the artist's investigation of the perceptive and cognitive boundaries of the visual field; through 3/21. Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St. (431-3685).
- **Andy Warhol**—Fifteen abstract paintings that were produced in 1982 and have not been previously exhibited; through 3/21. Kern, 558 Broadway (965-1706).

Chelsea

- **Vito Acconci**—Three new installations that were first made in 1974–75; through 4/1. Gladstone, 515 W. 24th St. (206-9300).
- **René Pierre Alain/Inka Essenhigh**—Paintings made from pigmented plaster/Paintings of cartoonlike biomorphic creatures. Through 3/21. Stux, 529 W. 20th St. (352-1600).
- **Matthew Benedict**—Works in gouache on paper, embroideries, and stencil works; 3/5–4/25. Alexander and Bonin, 132 Tenth Ave. (367-7474).
- **Renée Cox**—Large-scale color photographs of the artist as a comic-strip character; through 3/28. Cristinerose, 529 W. 20th St. (206-0297).
- **Robert Grosvenor/John McLaughlin**—A new large-scale sculpture that refers to architecture and vernacular building, and related works on paper/A selection of paintings by the West Coast abstractionist (1898–1976). Through 3/21. Cooper, 534 W. 21st St. (255-1105).
- **Pello Irazu**—Wall paintings, drawings, three-dimensional objects, sound, and sculpture that explore the tension between private and public domains; through 3/21. Weber, 529 W. 20th St. (691-5711).
- **Alain Kirili**—Three sculptures from the artist's ongoing *Commandments* series; through 3/28. Marlborough Chelsea, 211 W. 19th St. (463-8634).
- **Joseph Logan**—Paintings of meticulously rendered patterns that evoke sixties design; through 3/28. Clementine, 526 W. 26th St. (243-5937).
- **Sharon Louden**—Gestural drawings; through 4/4. Anderson, 453 W. 17th St. (463-0970).
- **Alice Neel/August Sander**—Paintings from the fifties through the seventies that depict men in suits and have not been previously exhibited/Photographs of businessmen, entrepreneurs, and industrialists from the twenties and thirties; 3/4–4/25. Cheim & Read, 521 W. 23rd St. (242-7727).
- **David Nelson**—Sculpture, photograms, drawings, and photographs that explore opposites and reversals; through 3/25. Debs & Co., 529 W. 20th St. (647-7080).
- **Carolanna Parlato**—Abstract paintings that suggest pools of floating color; through 3/28. Coploff, 526 W. 26th St. (674-1024).
- **Bruce Sargeant/Mark Beard**—Portraits of English and Continental gentry painted between the two world wars/Hand-colored Polaroid transfer prints of the artist's family and friends. Through 4/5. Wessel + O'Connor, 242 W. 26th St. (242-8811).
- **John Wesley**—A selection of paintings and works on paper from 1968 to 1997; through 3/21. Fredericks, 504 W. 22nd St. (633-6555).

Ground Rules:

Galleries are generally open Tues. through Sat. from between 10 and 11 to between 5 and 6.

Other

- **Bernard Chaet**—Paintings of landscapes and seascapes in Cape Ann, Massachusetts; through 4/4. New York Studio School, 8 W. 8th St. (673-6466).

Group Shows

Madison Avenue and Vicinity

- **Berry-Hill**—11 E. 70th St. (744-2300). "From Sacred to Sensual: Italian Paintings, 1400 to 1750," with works by Bellini, Canaletto, Tintoretto, Titian, others; through 3/14.
- **China Institute**—125 E. 65th St. (627-4424). "Scent of Ink," 50 masterworks of Chinese painting, with hand scrolls, hanging scrolls, and album leaves; through 6/20.
- **Hunter College**—695 Park Ave. (772-4991). "Roots & Reeds: The Amazing Grace of the Gullah People;" through 3/21.
- **Mitchell-Innes & Nash**—1018 Madison Ave. (744-7400). "Inner Self," with works by Duchamp, Giacometti, Gober, Quinn, othrs; through 3/13.
- **Sculpture Center**—167 E. 69th St. (879-3500). "Seeing & Believing," with works by Fox, Grimmer, Hendee, Lindberg, others; through 3/24.

57th Street Area

- **Boone**—745 Fifth Ave. (752-2929). A comparison of the methods, concerns, and influence of sculptors of different generations, with work by Artschwager, Bourgeois, Fischli, Weiss, others; through 3/28.
- **Equitable Gallery**—787 Seventh Ave. (554-4818), Mon.–Fri. 11–6, Sat. 12–5. "The Dutch in the Americas, 1600–1800," with rare prints, maps, and illustrated books from the John Carter Brown Library; through 4/4.
- **Littlejohn**—41 E. 57th St. (980-2323). "A Common Thread," with works by Chang, Haub, Haynes, Thomas; through 3/14.
- **PaineWebber**—1285 Avenue of the Americas. "A Central Park for the World: New York's Adirondack Park;" through 4/3.
- **Rosenfeld**—24 W. 57th St. (247-0082). Twentieth-century masterworks by African-American artists Alston, Catlett, Delaney, Gilliam, others; through 3/22.
- **Spanierman**—45 E. 58th St. (832-0208). American watercolor paintings from the last 125 years, with works by Burchfield, Cropsey, Demuth, Hassam, others; through 5/30.

SoHo and TriBeCa

- **Art in General**—79 Walker St. (219-0473). "Scale, Relatively Speaking," with works by Abrahamson, Andrus, Burns, Engler, others; through 4/4.
- **The Drawing Center**—35 Wooster St. (219-2166). Drawings by Buckley, Chagoya, Christie, Coen, others; through 3/28.
- **Feature**—76 Greene St. (941-7077). Works by Harrison, Lazarus, Linn, Robbins, Wurtz, others; through 3/28.
- **Henry Street Settlement**—466 Grand St. (598-0400). "Settlement Installations: Ain't It Funky Now," with works by Beens, Chamizo, Cullen, Eder, others; through 3/29.
- **Ingbar**—568 Broadway (334-1100). "Nine New Views," an exhibition of the work of nine artists exploring the continual reinvention of New York City; 3/5–3/28.
- **Lombard/Fried**—470 Broome St. (334-5060). "Dissin' the Real," with works by Gursky, Hutchings, Hybert, Kneffel, others; through 3/21.
- **Schickler**—560 Broadway (431-6363). "Art and the New Order: Photographs and Drawings of the European Avant-Garde, 1913–1923," will focus on the work of early modernist artists from Russia and Italy.; through 4/18.
- **Stendhal**—386 W. Broadway (334-4649). An exploration of the grotesque in photography, paintings, and sculpture, with works by Serrano, Paladino, Dine, Rauschenberg, others; through 3/22.

Chelsea

- **Elder**—529 W. 20th St. (462-2600). "Decorative, Functional, and Sculptural Objects for the Garden," with works by Calyer, Swanson, Godowsky, Tannen, others; 3/7–5/2.
- **Greene Naftali**—526 W. 26th St. (463-7770). "Super Freaks: Post Pop & the New Generation;" through 4/18.
- **Marks**—523 W. 24th St. (243-0200). "Maverick," new sculpture, photography, drawing, painting, and video from Bustamante, Fischli, Fritsch, Horn, others; through 4/11.
- **Protetch**—511 W. 22nd St. (633-6999). "Double Kitsch: Painters from China," the work of avant-garde artists exploring materialism, tradition, fashion, and transition; through 3/28.
- **Two Sculptors, Inc.**—124 W. 18th St. (645-3584). "The Figure in 20th Century Sculpture," with works by Arneson, Baskin, Bonham, Calder, others; 3/6–4/18.

Other

- **Columbia University**—Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Art Gallery, Broadway and 116th St. (854-7288). "The Visual Front: Spanish Civil War Posters"; through 3/28.
- **Forbes**—62 Fifth Ave. (209-5549). "Art from Scotland," an exhibition of contemporary paintings by traditional and avant-garde artists; through 3/21.
- **La MaMa**—6 E. 1st St. (505-2476). "Think Pink!" with works by Berry, Bidlo, Broaddus, Cohan, others; through 3/15.

Photography

- **Mark Abrahamson**—Photographs taken in China between 1981 and 1995 documenting that country's social, economic, and cultural changes; through 3/28. Moore, 594 Broadway (343-7016).

Photograph by Adam Reich, courtesy of the Paula Cooper Gallery.

Andrew Bush—A fifteen-year survey of photographs, including works from the series “Bonnettstown Hall,” “Vector Portraits,” “Envelopes,” and “Business Cards”; through 4/4. Saul, 560 Broadway (431-0747).

Robert Cumming—A survey of the artist’s photographs of architecture based on nautical motifs; through 4/4. Borden, 560 Broadway (431-0166).

Roe Ethridge—New photographs that depict the imaginary daily events of a mythical subdivision; through 3/21. Kustera, 41 Wooster St. (965-1527

Andreas Feininger—Photographs of urban and industrial landscapes from the thirties through the eighties; 3/5–4/12. SoHo Triad, 107 Grand St. (965-9500).

Generous Miracles—529 W. 20th St. (352-2858). Conceptual photographs by eleven artists of Cuban origin; through 3/31.

Jindrich Heisler—Surrealist photomontages and manipulated photographs by the Czech poet and artist (1914–1953); through 4/4. Ubu, 16 E. 78th St. (794-4444).

ICP—1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (860-1777), Tues. 11–8 (voluntary contribution 6–8), Wed.–Sun. 11–6; $5.50, $4 students and seniors. “Micha Bar-Am: An Israeli Photobiography.” Images of life in Israel by its premier photojournalist; through 5/31.

ICP Midtown—1133 Avenue of the Americas, at 43rd St. (860-1777), Tues. 11–8 (6–8 admission by voluntary contribution), Wed.–Sun. 11–6; $5.50, $4 seniors and students. “Weegee’s World: Life, Death, and the Human Drama.” A retrospective of more than 200 images by the legendary tabloid-news photographer; through 3/8.

Craig Kalpakjian—Cibachrome prints of interiors and architectural fixtures that explore the psychology of space; through 3/28. Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (980-5454).

Miller—138 Spring St. (226-1220). Photographs of Vietnam by Burrows, Conner, Epstein, An-My Le, Robinson; 3/4–4/11.

Florio Puenter—Black-and-white photographs taken in Havana between 1993 and 1994; through 3/28. Baron/Boisanté, 50 W. 57th St. (581-9191).

Sarah Rossiter—Color photographs of the artist with images of her mother’s paintings projected onto her body; through 3/28. Erben, 476 Broome St. (966-5283).

Thomas Ruff—*Photomontages that suggest propaganda* posters and incorporate collected images that have been manipulated by computer; through 3/28. 303, 525 W. 22nd St. (255-1121).

Paul Strand—Photographs that Strand took of his garden during the final years of his life at his home in Orgeval, France, many of which have not been previously exhibited or published; through 4/4. Aperture’s Burden Gallery, 20 E. 23rd St. (505-5555).

Susan Unterberg—Color photographs of landscapes in upstate New York and of the homes of the photographer’s fellow artists and friends; through 4/4. Richardson, 560 Broadway (343-1255).

Witkin—415 W. Broadway (925-5510). Photographs depicting various aspects of Italy by Angelo Lomeo and Sonja Bullaty, Linda Butler, and Leonard Sussman; through 3/14.

Museums

American Craft Museum—“Paper + Finland = Art.” Works on paper by contemporary Finnish artists; through 3/22. . . . “Expressions in Wood: Masterworks From the Wornick Collection.” Turned and shaped wood artworks by 56 artists from the United States, Europe, and Australia, drawn from the collection of Anita and Ron Wornick; through 3/22. 40 W. 53rd St. (956-3535); Tues., Wed., Fri., Sat., Sun. 10–6, Thurs. till 8 (pay as you wish 6–8); $5, $2.50 students and seniors.

American Museum of Natural History—“Sacred Mountains of the World.” Color photographs of revered mountains around the world; through 3/31. . . . “The Nature of Diamonds.” An exhibition exploring all aspects of the mineral, from its geological origins to its place in history, art, adornment, and literature, featuring significant gems from around the world; through 4/26. . . . “Drawing Shadows to Stone: Photographing North Pacific Peoples, 1897–1902.” A commemoration of the American Museum of Natural History’s Jesup North Pacific Expedition of 1897–1902, including approximately 100 archival photographs of scenes from daily life; through 5/31. Central Park West at 79th St. (769-5100); Sun.–Thurs. 10–5:45, Fri. and Sat. 10–8:45; $8 suggested contribution, $6 students and seniors, $4.50 children.

Asia Society—“Great Cities, Small Treasures: The Ancient World of the Indus Valley.” Over 100 examples of sculpture, ceramics, metalwork, seals, and other artifacts made by inhabitants of the Indus River Valley between 2600 B.C.E. and 1900 B.C.E., drawn primarily from collections in Pakistan; through 5/3. 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. (517-ASIA), Tues.–Sat. 11–6, Sun. 12–5, Thurs. 11–8 (6–8 free admission); $4, $2 seniors and students.

Bronx Museum of the Arts—“Transforming the Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966–1996.” A survey of Black British art that is being held in collaboration with the Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center (see photography listings) and the Studio Museum in Harlem; through 3/15. . . . “The Picnic: An Installation by Ernesto Pujol”; through 3/15. 1040 Grand Concourse, Bronx (718-681-6000), Wed. 3–9, Thurs. and Fri. 10–5, Sat. and Sun. 1–6; $3 suggested donation; $2 students; $1 senior citizens, children under 12 free.

Brooklyn Museum of Art—“Joan Snyder: Working in Brooklyn.” Works on paper from the past decade; through 6/14. . . . “Scattered Petals, Fallen Leaves, Shards of Glass: The Work of Bing Hu, Working in Brooklyn.” An exhibition of sixteen sculptures that incorporate material found on the streets of Brooklyn by the Chinese artist; through 5/10. 200 Eastern Pkwy., Brooklyn (718-638-5000); Wed.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. 11–9, Sun. 11–6; $4, $2 students, $1.50 seniors.

Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum Smithsonian Institution—“The Jewels of Lalique.” A retrospective of jewelry by the French art Nouveau artist-designer; through 4/12. . . . “Arquitectonica: The Times Square Project.” The first New York exhibition of photographs, models, and drawings by the Miami-based architectural firm, highlighting its plans for a hotel, entertainment, and retail complex at 42nd Street and Eighth Avenue; through 5/10. 2 E. 91st St. (849-8300), Wed.–Sat. 10–5. Sun. 12–5, Tues. 10–9 (free admission 5–9); $3, $1.50 seniors and students.

Dia Center for the Arts—“Tracey Moffatt: *Free-falling*.” A group of 25 photographs and a video installation by the Australian artist and filmmaker; through 6/14. . . . “Richard Serra: *Torqued Ellipses*.” Three monumental sculptures of Cor-Ten steel that explore the shaping of space rather than material as their primary subject; through 6/14. . . . “Dan Flavin: 1962/63, 1970, 1996.” Three installations using fluorescent light and six separate fluorescent works by the late sculptor; through 6/14. 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5912), Thurs.–Sun. 12–6; $4, $2 students and seniors.

El Museo del Barrio—“Diamantina Gonzalez: Recurrent Memories.” A site-specific installation about the relationship between time, space, and memory; through 3/29. . . . “Taíno: Pre-Columbian Art and Culture From the Caribbean.” The first comprehensive survey of the art of the Taíno, the dominant culture in Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica, and the Bahamas from about 1200 A.D. to the arrival of Columbus in 1492; through 5/3. . . . “Brian Nissen, Chinampas: A Vision of the Floating Gardens of Xochimilco.” Bronze, ceramic, and wood sculpture and mixed-media assemblages based on the form of *chinampas*, artificial islands originally created by the Aztecs for agricultural purposes; through 3/29. 1230 Fifth Ave. (831-7272); Wed.–Sun. 11–5, Thurs. 12–7; $4, $2 seniors and students.

Frick Collection—“Robert Adam, The Creative Mind: From the Sketch to the Finished Drawing.” Sixty-six drawings and watercolors by the renowned eighteenth-century architect Robert Adam, his brother and partner, James, and artists employed in their office that were selected from the 9,000 Adam drawings acquired by Sir John Soane in 1833; through 4/5. 1 E. 70th St. (288-0700); Tues.–Sat. 10–6, Sun. 1–6; $5, $3 students and seniors; children under 10 not admitted.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum—“China: 5,000 Years.” More than 500 artworks and artifacts from seventeen provinces of China; through 6/3. . . . “After *Mountains and Sea*: Frankenthaler 1956–1959.” A survey of the artist’s early paintings, including her groundbreaking *Mountains and Sea* of 1952, which laid the stylistic groundwork for her subsequent works; through 5/3. . . . “Visions of Paris: Robert Delauney’s Series.” An exhibition focusing on the artist’s series paintings of Saint-Séverin, the Eiffel Tower, and Paris as seen through his window; through 5/24. 1071 Fifth Ave., at 88th St. (423-3500); Sun.–Wed. 10–6, Fri. and Sat. 10–8 (Fri. 6–8, pay what you wish), closed Thurs.; $12, $7 seniors and students.

Guggenheim Museum SoHo—“China: 5,000 Years”; through 5/25. 575 Broadway, at Prince St. (423-3500), Sun. and Wed.–Fri. 11–6, Sat. 11–8 (6–8 pay what you wish); $8, $5 seniors and students.

Jewish Museum—“Still More Distant Journeys: The Artistic Emigrations of Lasar Segall.” The first major United States retrospective of the preeminent Brazilian artist (1891–1957) who was a major contributor to the development of German Expressionism and and Brazilian modernist painting; Through 5/10. . . . ASSIGNMENT: RESCUE, The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee.” The story behind the 1940–41 rescue mission undertaken by Varian Fry, a New York–based Frenchman who arranged safe passage out of France for many anti-Nazi artists, writers, scientists, and political refugees; through 3/29. . . . “Blackbird, blackbird.” An installation by Kristin Oppenheim that is the first exhibition of the museum’s Contemporary Artist Projects series; through 3/15. 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (423-3200); Sun., Mon., Wed., Thurs. 11–5:45, Tues. 11–8 (Tues. after 5; free); $7, $5 students and seniors.

Metropolitan Museum of Art—“Paul Strand circa 1916.” An exhibition of 50 rare prints tracing the artist’s transition from soft-focus pictorial style to modernism; 3/10–5/31. . . . “Augustin Pajou, Royal Sculptor.” The first comprehensive exhibition of the work of the eighteenth-century French sculptor; through 5/24. . . . “Pierre-Paul Prud’hon.” The first American retrospective of the works of the eighteenth-century French court painter and draftsman; 3/10–6/7. . . . “Conversion by Candlelight: The Four Magdalens by Georges de la Tour.” Four full-length paintings of Mary Magdalene seated before a mirror, her profile illuminated by candlelight; through 3/15. . . . “The Nature of Islamic Ornament, Part I: Calligraphy.” An exhibition surveying the development of Islamic calligraphy; through 6/28. . . . “When Silk Was Gold: Central Asian and Chinese Textiles in the Metropolitan and Cleveland Museums of Art”; through 5/17. . . . “Evocative Fragments.” A selection of twentieth-century paintings, sculptures, drawings, and photographs depicting fragments of the human body; through 6/14. . . . “Gianni Versace.” A tribute to the late designer that reveals the influence of art on his fashion and theater designs; through 3/22. 1000 Fifth Ave., at 82nd St. (879-5500); Tues.–Thurs. and Sun. 9:30–5:15, Fri. and Sat. 9:30–9; $8 contribution, $4 children and seniors. The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park (923-3700); Tues.–Sun. 9:30–4:45 (closes at 5:15 between April and September); $8, $4 seniors and students.

Museum at F.I.T.—“Norman Norell.” The first retrospective of the American designer (1900–1972) known for his tailoring perfection; through 4/18. . . . “Toledo/Toledo: A Marriage of Art and Fashion.” Approximately 100 pieces of clothing designed by Isabel Toledo, and paintings, fashion illustrations, sketches, sculptures, and mannequins by her husband, Ruben Toledo; through 4/25. Seventh Ave. at 27th St. (217-5966), Tues.–Fri. 12–8, Sat. 10–5; free.

Museum for African Art—“African Faces, African Figures: The Arman Collection.” African sculptures from the collection of the sculptor Armand P. Arman; through 4/19. 593 Broadway, bet. Houston and Prince Sts. (966-1313), Tues.–Fri. 10:30–5:30, Sat. and Sun. 12–6; $5, $2.50 seniors, students, and children.

Museum of American Folk Art—"A.G. Rizzoli: Architect of Magnificent Visions." A survey of architectural drawings, illuminated poems, and visionary writings by the San Francisco architectural draftsman (1896–1981); through 3/8. 2 Lincoln Square (595-9533), Tues.–Sun. 11:30–7:30; free.

Museum of Jewish Heritage–A Living Memorial to the Holocaust—Permanent exhibitions of more than 2,000 photographs and 800 historical and cultural artifacts documenting the Jewish experience from the 1880s to the present, and 24 films chronicling the memories of Holocaust survivors. 18 First Place, Battery Park City (968-1800), Sun.–Wed. 9–5, Thurs. 9–8, Fri. and eve of Jewish holidays 9–2, closed Sat. and Jewish holidays; $7, $5 students and seniors.

Museum of Modern Art—"Chuck Close." A retrospective of paintings, drawings, prints, and photographs by the American artist known for his monumental, psychologically charged portraits of artists and anonymous sitters; through 5/26. . . . "Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism." The first United States retrospective of the works of the renowned Finnish architect, designer, and town planner, including sketches and competition drawings, models, new and archival photographs, and examples of furniture and glass; through 5/19. . . . "Fernand Léger." A retrospective of paintings and drawings by the French artist (1881–1955) from his early series "Contrastes de Formes (1913–14)," the first fully abstract works to emerge from Cubism, through his last realist paintings of construction workers of the late forties and early fifties; through 5/12. . . . "Fabrications." An exhibition developed jointly by MOMA, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the Wexner Center for the Arts, comprising a total of twelve installations simultaneously constructed at all three venues by architects and architectural teams; through 4/28. 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480); Sat.–Tues. 10:30–6, Thurs. 10:30–6, Fri. 10:30–8:30 (4:30–8:30 pay what you wish), closed Wed.; $9.50, $6.50 students and seniors.

Museum of the City of New York—"Bridging New York." An exhibition of paintings, prints, drawings, postcards, and vintage photographs exploring the role played by bridges in the creation of Greater New York; through 6/28. . . . "New York From Above: An Aerial View." Paintings depicting aerial views of the city by Spelman Evans Downer; through 6/14. . . . "Beyond the Grave: Cultures of Queens Cemeteries." Photographs of cemeteries in Queens taken by Dr. Ilana Harlow; through 3/8. 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (534-1672); Wed.–Sat. 10–5, Sun. 1–5; $5, $3 students and seniors.

National Academy Museum & School of the Fine Arts—"Fair & Free: Images of Childhood, 1827–1992." Paintings, works on paper, and sculptures depicting children; through 3/8. . . . "Stages of Creation: Public Sculpture by National Academicians." Models for public sculpture by Louise Bourgeois, Neil Estern, Marisol, Tom Otterness, Tony Rosenthal, and others; through 3/8. 1083 Fifth Ave., at 89th St. (369-4880); Wed.–Sun. 12–5 (Fri. until 8); $5, $3.50 seniors, students, and children under 16.

National Museum of the American Indian Smithsonian Institution—"Memory and Imagination: The Legacy of Maidu Indian Artist Frank Day." Works by the first self-taught Native American painter in California to depict customs of his tribe; through 5/3. George Gustav Heye Cebter, 1 Bowling Green (514-3888), 10–5 daily (Thurs. to 8); free.

New York Public Library—"A Secret Location on the Lower East Side: Basement Publishing in New York City and Elsewhere." An exhibition focusing on the writers, artists, publishers, and communities who produced publications associated with the use of the mimeograph machine from the sixties through the early eighties; through 5/30. . . . "Subject Matters: Photography, Romana Javitz, and the New York Public Library." The story of the visionary curator Romana Javitz, who during her 39-year tenure (1929–1968), built the Picture Collection at the New York Public Library into a world-renowned resource of documentary photography; through 3/28. Fifth Ave. and 42nd St. (869-8089); Mon. 10–6, Tues.–Wed. 11–6, Thurs.–Sat. 10–6; free.

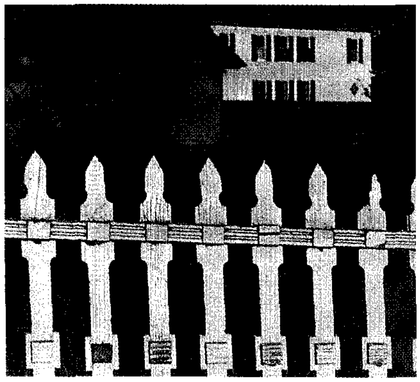
New York Transit Museum—"50 Years of the Subway Sun." Posters from the "Sunday Sun" poster series that were created for the Interborough Rapid Transit Company between 1910 and the early sixties; through 3/22. Boerum Place and Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn Heights (718-243-8601), Tues.–Fri. 10–4, Sat. and Sun. 12–5; $3, $1.50 students and seniors (free for seniors every Wed. from 12–4).

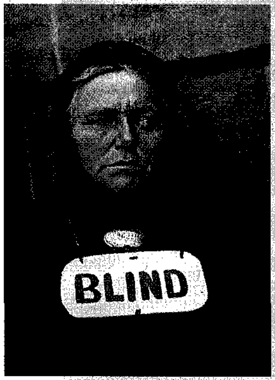
New-York Historical Society—"Signs and Wonders: The Spectacular Lights of Times Square." A look at the development of technology and imagery in Times Square's advertising signage; through 3/8. 2 W. 77th St. (873-3400); Wed.–Sun. noon–5; $5, $3 seniors and children.

Photography
The Mod Squad

It's a month, as it often is in New York City, when the legacy of Alfred Stieglitz looms large. The legendary photographer and gallery owner's taste in painting is exemplified in the Whitney Museum's current retrospective of Arthur Dove, the Stieglitz protégé credited with producing, in 1910, America's first purely abstract works. And now the photography Stieglitz championed will be on view, too—in the Metropolitan Museum's "Paul Strand Circa 1916" (March 10 through May 31), an exhibition that explores Strand's abrupt segue from soft-focus pictorialism to modernism. While Dove's breakthrough is still largely inexplicable, Strand's seemingly sudden embrace of modernism (his semi-abstractions of bowls and railings and their shadows predate Alexander Rodchenko's abstractions by a decade) had a very clear precedent in painting, particularly in Cubism. Strand often cited Cézanne, Picasso, and Braque as early influences (not coincidentally, his mentor had exhibited Cézanne watercolors at his 291 gallery in 1911). Strand borrowed from the old masters as well—it is clearly the portraits of Rembrandt that inspired his candid pictures of New York's lower classes, begun in the fall of 1916 and considered among his most powerful works. Still, 1916 marked a stunning achievement for Strand and a coup for Stieglitz, too, who praised the newcomer's work as "brutally direct, pure and devoid of trickery."

EDITH NEWHALL





Photographs: ©1998, Paul Strand Archive, Aperature Foundation, Inc.

P.S. 1 Contemporary Art Center—"John Coplans: A Self-Portrait"; through 3/29. . . . "Jackie Winsor: Sculpture"; through 4/12. . . . "10 Years Portikus, Frankfurt, Germany"; through 4/12. . . . "Matthew McCaslin, Susan Etkin, Michael Joo"; through 4/12. . . . "Installations/Projects—Siah Armajani, Per Barclay, Shane Cullen, and Philip Napier"; through 4/12. . . . "Vertical Painting Show"; through 6/28. . . . " 22-25 Jackson Ave., at 46th Ave. (718-784-2084), Wed.–Sun. 12–6; $4 suggested donation, $2 students and seniors.

Pierpont Morgan Library—"A Seal Upon Thine Heart: Glyptic Art of the Ancient Near East. ca. 3500–2100 B.C." A selection of seals from the Library's collection and from the Yale Babylonian Collection, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and several private collections; through 4/26. . . . "To Observe and Imagine: British Drawings and Watercolors, 1600–1900"; through 5/3. 29 E. 36th St. (685-0008), Tues.–Fri. 10:30–5, Sat. 10:30–6; Sun. 12–6; $6; $4 students and seniors.

Studio Museum in Harlem—"Transforming the Crown: African, Asian, and Caribbean Artists in Britain, 1966–1996." A survey of Black British art that is being held in collaboration with the Franklin H. Williams Caribbean Cultural Center (see photography listings) and the Bronx Museum of the Arts; through 3/15. 144 W. 125th St. (864-4500); Wed.–Fri. 10–5, Sat. and Sun. 1–6; $5, $3 seniors and students.

Whitney Museum of American Art—"Bill Viola." The first full-scale overview of the work of the California-based video artist, including 15 installations, 25 videotapes, and drawings and notebooks from the past 25 years; through 5/10. . . . "Arthur Dove: A Retrospective." Paintings, assemblages, pastels, and drawings by the pioneering American modernist; through 4/12. . . . "Collection in Context: 1948." A multimedia exhibition surveying important artwork, music, film, and news footage from that year; through 3/15. 945 Madison Ave., at 75th St. (570-3676); Wed., Fri., Sat., Sun. 11–6, Thurs. 1–8; $8, $7 students and seniors (free Thurs. 6–8).

Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris—"*Garden of Qián*, by Ming Fay." A fantasy garden of tree and fruits handcrafted from paper, wire, synthetic fibers, and layers of polyurethane; through 4/17. 120 Park Ave., at 42nd St. (878-2550), Mon.–Sat. 11–6 (Thurs. till 7:30); free.

Auctions

Christie's—502 Park Ave. (546-1000). 3/10 at 10: "Fine Watches and Wristwatches." On view from 3/6. 3/11 at 10 and 2: "The Nineteenth Century." On view from 3/6.

Christie's East—219 E. 67th St. (546-1000). 3/11 at 10 and 2: "Twentieth-Century Paintings." On view from 3/7.

Doyle—175 E. 87th St. (427-2730). 3/11 at 10: "Fine Furniture, Decorations, and Paintings." On view from 3/7.

Sotheby's—1334 York Ave. at 72nd St. (606-7000). 3/4 at 10:15 and 2: "Arcade." On view from 2/27. 3/6 and 3/7 at 10 and 2: "Prints." On view from 2/28. 3/9 at 10:15 and 2: "Watches." On view from 3/5.

Swann Galleries—104 E. 25th St. (254-4710). 3/5 at 10:30: "Select Maps and Decorative Graphics." On view from 2/28.

restaurants

Preserve Reserves...Union Do's...Ribollita

Manhattan

Lower New York

Alison on Dominick—An impeccably turned-out room with blue banquettes and tender lighting. Perfectionist owner Alison Becker Hurt makes sure that all is well. *38 Dominick St., nr. Hudson St. (727-1188). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Bo Ky—This very basic Chinatown spot has been dishing up delicious noodle soups to the neighborhood since before the Mees and Tang Tangs sprouted uptown. Expect to share a table. *80 Bayard St. (406-2292). (I) ($).*

Cellar in the Sky—This oenophile's dream changes its menu, and its well-chosen wine pairings, monthly; the one constant is the spectacular view. Four courses of creatively prepared, seasonal American fare costs $60, and the flights of three wines begin at $35. Lately, offerings have included a chili-grilled blue-prawn salad with mango marmalade and Cuba libre spices, roasted pheasant with spinach gnocchi, and a trio of Sonoma bottlings. Jacket required; love of heights recommended. *1 World Trade Center (524-7000). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Chanterelle—Spare and elegant, virtually religious, this TriBeCa restaurant is a favorite among those who want a Big Deal. Chef David Waltuck runs a grand kitchen—seafood sausage, cold fruit soups, and anything he does with truffles in season. Wife Karen runs the front room with class and warmth. *2 Harrison St., at Hudson St. (966-6960). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Kelley and Ping—The type of funky, lofty noodle house that could only exist—and thrive—in SoHo. *127 Greene St., nr. Prince St. (228-1212). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Layla—A Middle Eastern feast, complete with gyrating belly dancer, brought to you by Drew Nieporent and his TriBeCa production team. Menu highlights include crabmeat phyllo, cinnamon-braised lamb shank with okra, and toasted couscous and almond ice milk. *211 W. Broadway, at Franklin St. (431-0700). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

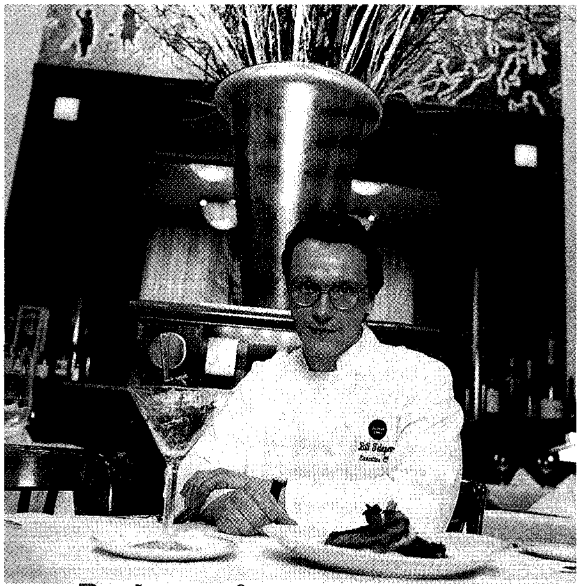
Il Mattone—In a neighborhood populated by pricey destination restaurants, this affordable Italian place is a great, dependable alternative. Try the brick-oven pizza or house specialties like penne alla vodka, pollo Sorrentino, seafood scampi, and vitello saltimbocca. *413 Greenwich St. (343-0030). (I) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Montrachet—Owner Drew Nieporent now has five places in New York, including Nobu, Layla, Zeppole at the TriBakery, and Tribeca Grill, and another in San Francisco. But this is his baby—attractive, lively, and one of the first truly great restaurants in lower Manhattan. There's lunch on Fridays—try the Roquefort-and-pear salad—and dinner Monday through Saturday. *239 W. Broadway, nr. White St. (219-2777). (E) AE only.*

Morton's of Chicago—The second New York location of the national steakhouse chain. Portions are huge, quality is consistent, and, in case you haven't noticed, beef is back. *90 West St. (732-5665). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Nobu—The great Nobu Matsuhisa—actually, he's young, good-looking, and incredibly hip—has arrived in TriBeCa. And New Yorkers haven't tasted Japanese cooking like this—unless, of course, they've visited Matsuhisa's restaurant in L.A. *105 Hudson St. (219-0500). (E) AE, MC, V.*

The Odeon—Downtown has fallen in love all over again with this TriBeCa institution. The bar's out of Dashiell Hammett, and the dining room gets everyone from the banker, his wife, and their 2-year-old to movie stars, artists, and assorted big-deal celebrities. *145 W. Broadway, nr. Thomas St. (233-0507). (M) AE, MC, V.*



Restaurant
Friend of a Farmer

In the few weeks since chef Bill Telepan arrived at JUdson Grill, he's done away with that power-lunch scene's Asian influence and replaced it with the sort of organic, seasonal fare he introduced at the late Ansonia. His menu combines signatures like Peekytoe crab cocktail and foie gras terrine with such appropriately wintry new concoctions as duck-garlic sausages, roast venison with mashed rutabaga, moulard-duck breast in blood-orange sauce, and roasted pork loin with spare ribs and sauerkraut. (152 West 52nd Street; 582-5252.)

Penang—This Malaysian mini-dynasty began in Queens and has sprouted multiple Manhattan locations. Sample such exotic offerings as roti canai, beef rendang, and sarang burung in environs that strive to evoke the tropics. *109 Spring St. (274-8883). Also, 240 Columbus Ave., at 71st St. (769-3988). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Pierino—An Italian dining room full of businesspeople and city politicians for lunch and dinner for the bankers on their way uptown offering meta-traditional dishes like lobster and steak. Yes, that was Peter Vallone. *107 Reade St. (513-0610). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Provence—Lots of people have got engaged in the charming garden at this authentic country French restaurant; even more have sampled the bourride, bouillabaisse, and bass flambé. If you can't actually make it to the Côte d'Azur, this is the next best thing. *38 MacDougal St. (475-7500). (M–E) AE.*

Raoul's—The dull roar in this cavelike bistro—aging gracefully amid the high-strung Thoroughbreds of SoHo's restaurant racetrack—is a heartwarming sound. *180 Prince St., nr. Thompson St. (966-3518). (M) AE, MC, V.*

SoHo Kitchen and Bar—Grape nuts celebrate the 96-spigot Cruvinet, ordering flights of Cabernets or seven Pinot Noirs to taste and compare, but SoHo neighbors love it, too—for all those beers on tap, for the thin-crust pizza, for a glance at the game on the TV overhead. *103 Greene Street., nr. Prince St. (925-1866). (I) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Tennessee Mountain—This 1807 landmark farmhouse serves up huge portions of smoked chicken and grilled ribs, plus regional appetizers and desserts. Bring those breath mints and Handi-Wipes for a $17.95 all-you-can-eat on Monday night. *143 Spring St. (431-3993). (I) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Tribeca Grill—Though this spacious, brick-walled restaurant sometimes serves as canteen for the film execs (and movie stars) in offices upstairs, the creative American cuisine and lively bar scene make it a popular downtown destination. Known for its roasted meats and fish specials. *375 Greenwich St., at Franklin St. (941-3900). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

The Wall Street Club—Until April, this third-floor annex of Wall Street Kitchen & Bar serves only lunch. If you have anything to celebrate, do: Ten vintages of Dom Pérignon are available by the glass. The modern American menu features comte ravioli, oyster pan roast, and bacon-wrapped brook trout with spaetzle. *70 Broad St. (797-9500). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Wall Street Kitchen & Bar—As downtown grows more and more residential, its halls of finance, like this former bank building, are being converted into service establishments. This sister of SoHo Kitchen & Bar offers a similarly extensive selection of beers and wines by the glass, plus such eclectic American fare as beer-braised short ribs with egg noodles, and pizza topped with shrimp, smoked bacon, and roasted tomatoes. *70 Broad St. (797-7070). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Windows on the World—Chef Michael Lomonaco, formerly of the '21' Club, has landed at this landmark restaurant known for what may be the most spectacular view of Manhattan Island. His new menu focuses on sophisticated renditions of American food, including skillet-roasted bluepoint oysters with sweet shallot-caviar cream; open raviolo of forest mushrooms, pumpkin, and sage; and Maine lobster with truffles, root vegetables, and buttermilk biscuits. Be sure to take advantage of the restaurant's superlative wine cellar. *1 World Trade Center, 107th floor (524-7000). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Photograph by Robert Wright.

Ground Rules:

Here lie a few hundred of the city's more noteworthy restaurants, some *New York* advertisers among them. The price guide, admittedly imperfect, is as follows: (E) = expensive, $35 and over per place; (M) = moderate, $15–$30 per place; (I) = inexpensive, $15 and under per place.

Following each listing there is also a code indicating acceptable methods of payment: ($) = cash only, AE = American Express, CB = Carte Blanche, DC = Diners Club, DS = Discover, M = MasterCard, TM = Transmedia, V = Visa. "AE only" indicates that American Express is the only accepted charge/credit card.

Below 14th Street, East

Asti—This 70-year-old Village mainstay epitomizes the concept of the singing waiter. Professional opera singers perform arias and show tunes while waiters manage to carry a tune *and* serve orders of seafood fra diavolo, Maine lobsters, and Black Angus steak. *13 E. 12th St. (741-9105). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Gotham Bar & Grill—Alfred Portale's kitchen, with its architectural ingenuity and whimsical creativity, serves as a finishing school for the city's all-star chefs before they launch their own careers. This awesome dining temple has long been a staple. *12 E. 12th St. (620-4020). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Haveli—Haveli distinguishes itself from the Sixth Street strip, for its food as much as its upscale decor. Possibly the only East Village restaurant with an *intentionally* shattered windowpane. *100 Second Ave., nr. 6th St. (982-0533). (I–M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Miracle Grill—One of the earliest pioneers on the East Village dining scene, this comfortable Mexican cantina is especially welcoming in warm weather, when the garden is a serene urban oasis. The grilled-vegetable plate surpasses most. *112 First Ave., nr. 7th St. (254-2353). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

Osso Buco—Popular Italian restaurant on a much-traveled Village corridor serving family-style portions of the eponymous house specialty, Caesar salad, fried calamari, and T-bone steak. *88 University Pl., nr. 11th St. (645-4525). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Roettele A.G.—One of the very few places on these shores to serve a distinctive mix of Swiss and German cuisines, including hearty specialties like spaetzle, sauerbraten, Wiener schnitzel, and fondue. There's a lovely garden and, on Thursdays, the exotic strains of live Swiss music. *126 E. 7th St. (674-4140). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

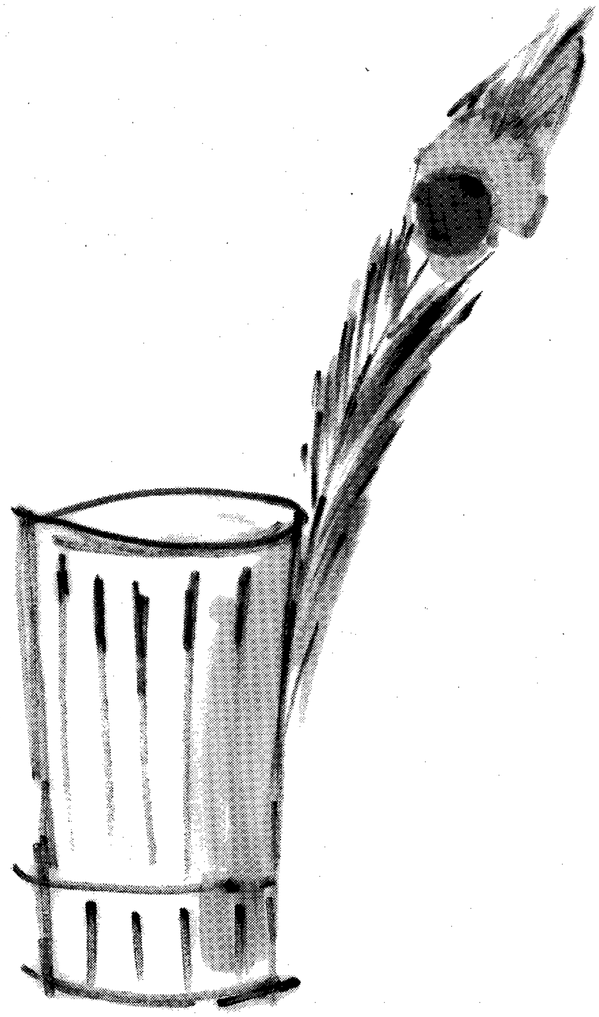
Three of Cups—Proving that the East Village has room enough for another wood-burning oven pizza parlor besides Two Boots. The "mickey," a charred spud dripping with butter, shouldn't be missed. *83 First Ave., at 5th St. (388-0059). (I) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Below 14th Street, West

Andalousia—This relatively undiscovered Village Moroccan rightly prides itself on its roster of tagines and couscous specials. B'stilla is a standout. *28 Cornelia St. (929-3693). (I) MC, V.*

Bar Cichetti—Modeled after a typical bar in Venice, where patrons gather for a glass of wine—choose here among 50—and small snacks called *cichetti* (think Italian tapas). Sample among appetizer-size portions of rice balls, fried meatballs, frittatas, and crostini, or, should these snacks merely whet the appetite, have a full meal of pasta, chicken, fish or beef. Perfect for pre- or post–Film Forum noshing. *220 W. Houston St. (229-0314). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Bar Pitti—This Tuscan trattoria, with tables spilling out onto the sidewalk, has simpler, cheaper food than Da Silvano next door, but it's just as good a spot to sip an espresso and watch the Village foot traffic. Great fettunta. *268 Sixth Ave., nr. Bleecker St. (982-3300). (I–M) ($).*



Just in case you missed *The New York Times* review of Peacock Alley and our exciting new chef Laurent Gras, here's a quick summary:

★ ★ ★

"The three best meals I have had this year have all been at the same restaurant. Peacock Alley." -*Ruth Reichl*

PEACOCK ALLEY

THE WALDORF-ASTORIA 301 PARK AVENUE, NEW YORK 212.872.4895

Blue Note Jazz Club and Restaurant—Should you develop an appetite while listening to some of the world's best jazz acts, this famous Village club offers a full menu, with such Continental fare as shrimp with scallops and salmon with champagne sauce. Open for brunch, too. *131 W. 3rd St. (475-8592). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Da Silvano—Trattoria with tables out front converts this thoroughfare into a people promenade. Great food and views of the local color. Yes, that was Anna Wintour. *260 Sixth Ave., nr. Bleecker St. (982-2343). (M) AE, MC, V.*

53 Grove Street Cafe—This American bistro on a charming Village side street has the requisite exposed brick walls and outdoor patio (in warm weather). There's a raw bar from which one—actually, two—could order the plateau fruits de mer, which comes with vodka or champagne. Or try the sesame-crusted tuna with lemongrass marinade, the filet mignon in bourbon sauce, or the salmon en papillote with oranges. *53 Grove St. (924-8299). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Greenwich Cafe—This Village café, with its plush antique wing chairs and rococo mirrors, has a loungy feel and is open around the clock with a menu that crosses every border. Representative items include crab cakes with lobster sauce and fennel tempura, grilled salmon with jasmine rice, and a veggie burger with minted couscous. No cover for the jazz brunch. *75 Greenwich Ave. (255-5489). (I–M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

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Le Zoo—The newest West Village scene, with lots of Left Bank ambience. The menu sticks to standards like poulet grand mère, saumon en croute, and cassolette. *314 W. 11th St. (620-0393). (M) AE, MC, V.*

One if by Land, Two if by Sea—Elegant Village restaurant situated within an eighteenth-century carriage house previously owned by Aaron Burr. Four fireplaces and nightly piano music enhance a fine menu of American specialties like beef Wellington. *17 Barrow St. (228-0822). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Salam Cafe and Restaurant—This casual Arabic restaurant ensconced in a Village brownstone offers a broad variety of Middle Eastern food, including kebabs, couscous, and lamb with yogurt-and-sesame sauce, plus lots of vegetarian options. Try the Lebanese wine. *104 W. 13th St. (741-0277). (I–M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Tio Pepe—A reliably festive spot for classic Mexican and Spanish fare, from tapas to paella Valenciana, with an enclosed sidewalk café and skylit garden room. *168 W. 4th St. (242-9338). (I–M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Washington Place—The large, comfortable dining room feels vaguely colonial, with old prints on the walls and lots of dark wood, but the well-executed American menu couldn't be more modern. Standouts include maple-brushed salmon, roasted venison, and an unusually delicious cherry pie. *75 Washington Pl. (539-1776). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Ye Waverly Inn—This shrine to Colonial times offers American standards like chicken potpie, baked peasant meatloaf, Indian pudding, and hot mulled wine. The room in the landmark building, dated to 1844, has *three* working fireplaces, and is decorated, in true Laura Ashley fashion, with lace curtains and floral wallpaper. *16 Bank St. (929-4377). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

14th–42nd Streets, East Side

Alva—Bare lightbulbs evoke Thomas Edison, the namesake of this sleek spot invented by Charles Palmer and designer Fernando Saralegui, but the food is all very twentieth-century: crispy shrimp cocktail, cod-and-salmon cakes, veal stew, an exciting cheese course. *36 E. 22nd St. (228-4399). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

An American Place—This venerable midtown spot is to New York as Chez Panisse is to Berkeley. With his eclectic American menu, Larry Forgione made the national cuisine interesting again. *2 Park Ave., at 32nd St. (684-2122). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Angelo & Maxie's Steakhouse—This luxurious new steakhouse serves enormous portions of beef—plus alternatives for artery-watchers—to a crowd that's come to have a good, gluttonous time. Many choose to follow their meal with a leisurely smoke, which they're welcome to procure in the well-stocked cigar store. *233 Park Ave. So., at 19th St. (220-9200). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Back Porch—Ideal spot for Murray Hill residents to meet for drinks alfresco and southwestern-flavored fare. Sit outdoors as long as the weather holds. *488 Third Ave., at 33rd St. (685-3828). (I) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Shopping **Across the Street chef Seen Lippert is doing double duty for boss Eli Zabar, who also owns the mega-gourmet market Vinegar Factory. In a commendably waste-not spirit, Lippert scavenges ripe surplus fruit from the store's produce department and cooks up batches of savory jams, chutneys, and sauces—which she bottles under the Across the Street label and sells on the Vinegar Factory's shelves. Recent standouts have included the Tropics Preserve, studded with mangoes, pineapple, and kumquats; sweet-potato-and-apple butter; and Meyer lemon-and-quince marmalade. (431 East 91st Street; 987-0885.)**

Bambou—There's a new flavor on East 14th Street: ambitiously nouvelle renderings of Caribbean cuisine, like ackee-and-callaloo tart with scotch-bonnet-and-tomato salsa, and coconut-curry lobster with banana-lentil salad. The relaxing, tropical dining room and bar have already attracted such boldfaced names and beautiful faces as Harry Belafonte, Marisa Tomei, Iman, and Roshumba. *243 E. 14th St. (358-0012). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Bolo—There's nothing discreet about Bobby Flay's neo-Spanish cooking. In a room that reminds you of Gaudí by way of Pee-wee Herman, Flay turns out fiery, bold dishes like oven-roasted mushrooms with goat cheese and chili oil as well as paella with curried shellfish and chicken. We *love* the white-peach sangría. *23 E. 22nd St. (228-2200). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Brew's—As casual and comfortable as a burger joint gets. This two-story landmark always pleases. Great beer selection, and the always hospitable longtime owners, the Brew family, make this an oasis in the desert above 14th Street. A new attraction is a weekend brunch accompanied by live Irish music, and fifteen versions of that most archetypical brunch drink, the Bloody Mary. *156 E. 34th St. (889-3369). (I) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Campagna—The *Letterman* crowd is at one table, Time Warner honchos are at another, and isn't that . . . ? Despite the frenzy of having become Media Central, this smart little trattoria serves some of the most satisfying Italian food in Manhattan. Chef Mark Straussman is to thank for dishes like rabbit in polenta, gnocchi with wild mushrooms and truffle oil, and grilled tuna with beets. *24 E. 21st St. (460-0900). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

El Parador Cafe—Very possibly the oldest Mexican restaurant in New York City, this comfortable, dependable establishment is known for its enormous selection of premium tequilas and traditional dishes like mole poblano, carnitas, and duck with cuipotle glaze. *325 E. 34th St. (679-6812). (M) MC, V.*

Gramercy Tavern—As a second act to Danny Meyer's much-loved Union Square Cafe, this Flatiron American newcomer doesn't disappoint. The main dining room manages to be both impressive and cozy, the service superlative, and Tom Colicchio's food inspired. For lesser appetites and lower budgets, the bar menu in the Tavern Room is equally delicious. Orchestrate your own cheese course and sample the varied selection of wines by the glass. *42 E. 20th St. (477-0777). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

i Trulli—A Southern Italian restaurant that aims to prove that tomato sauce is not crucial for survival, i Trulli succeeds with tasty focaccia, homemade sausage, tripe, and venison. In warm weather, the garden is a perfect midtown escape. *122 E. 27th St. (481-7372). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Les Halles—Even though it hasn't been around forever, this utterly perfect re-creation of a Left Bank bistro seems like it has. This is the place to come for onion soup, steak-frites, celeri rémoulade, crème caramel—that sort of thing. *411 Park Ave. So., bet. 28th and 29th Sts. (679-4111). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Mesa Grill—Chef Bobby Flay believes in big flavors and big portions. He developed his own signature style, plundering the ingredients of the American Southwest for such mouthwatering creations as roasted-garlic shrimp tamales and ancho-honey-glazed salmon. Loud, stylish, and loads of fun, especially for those partaking of the house drink, a cactus-pear margarita. *102 Fifth Ave., nr. 16th St. (807-7400). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Novitá—A beautiful new Flatiron restaurant with upscale, nouvelle Italian. Try, especially, the handmade pastas, which seem to have only beneficial effects on all the fashion types and Elite models who've made this room their home away from home. *102 E. 22nd St. (677-2222). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Oyster Bar—When a fire temporarily shuttered this Manhattan landmark, its long-faithful clientele were bereft, unsure of what to do with themselves at lunchtime. The doors have reopened, the vaulted ceilings have been (for the most part) repaired, and the regulars are taking their places at the counter. Famous for its 25 varieties of oysters, extensive wine selection, and comprehensive seafood preparations, the restaurant is a magnet for commuters and tourists alike. *Grand Central Terminal, 42nd St. and Vanderbilt Ave. (490-6650). (M) AE, CB, DS, MC, V.*

Park Bistro—Provençal offerings prepared and served with notable agility in an intimate—sometimes crowded—setting. *414 Park Ave. at 28th St. (689-1360). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Patria—Zesty Latin American fare brought to you in a festive high-energy atmosphere. The three-story dining room suits the changing mood of diners: bright and airy by day and warm and earthy by night. Chef Doug Rodriguez comes from Miami via a childhood in New York. Really. Try the Mojito, Patria's signature drink made from sugarcane. *250 Park Ave. So., nr. 20th St. (777-6211). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Rodeo Bar & Grill—This place bills itself as "the longest-running honky-tonk in New York," attracting bikers, families, and music-industry insiders who come for the live nightly music as much

Photograph by Steven Freeman.

as for the Tex-Mex grub. Try the house-smoked baby back ribs, bison burgers, and Santa Fe hand rolls, or just grab a drink at the horse trailer that's been converted into a bar. *375 Third Ave., at 27th St. (683-6500). (I) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Rossini's—This elegant split-level restaurant offers Northern Italian cuisine and live music nightly. Chef Gilberto specializes in seafood, and private parties are easily accommodated. *108 E. 38th St. (683-0135). (E) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Turkish Kitchen—This crimson-walled den has long been a beacon for adventurous eaters, who come for house specialties including kebabs, seafood and a variety of Turkish appetizers. *386 Third Ave., nr. 27th St. (679-1810). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Union Square Cafe—The careful service, human-scale dining rooms, and peerless California café cuisine make this one of the best restaurants in the city. *21 E. 16th St. (243-4020). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

The Water Club—This romantic spot overlooking the East River is a favorite for formal affairs, but even your average demanding New York diner would be happy with the American menu and the airy, yacht club–like setting. As to be expected in this nautical environment, there's a heavy emphasis on seafood like lobster and soft-shell crabs, and a massive spread for Sunday brunch. Jackets suggested in the main dining room. *F.D.R. Drive via 23rd St. (683-3333). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

14th–42nd Streets, West Side

Bright Food Shop—A Chelsea luncheonette with an innovative, healthy Mexican menu with Asian influences. Excellent desserts and a great selection of Mexican fruit sodas. *216 Eighth Ave., at 21st St. (243-4433). (I–M) ($).*

Bryant Park Grill—This long-awaited restaurant on the edge of the city's prettiest pocket park has been mobbed from day one. Go at an off-hour for Caesar salad, New York steak, soft-shell crabs, and scallion pancakes. *40th St., between Fifth and Sixth Aves. (840-6500). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Caffe Bondí Ristorante—Popular with the photographers who work in the Flatiron district and foodies from all over who fill the garden in warm weather. Specializes in Sicilian dishes like coniglio alla stimparata, pasta con sarde, and cassata Siciliana. Open seven days a week, including weekend brunch. *7 W. 20th St. (691-8136). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Da Umberto—Low-key Chelsea façade belies the extraordinary Italian offerings inside. Getting a table is no small task, especially in the evening. This is a Euro–New York crossroads. A mad cacophony of laughter and chatter in Brooklynese and Roman. Don't dress down. *107 W. 17th St. (989-0303). (E) AE only.*

Simply Pasta—Perfectly situated for pretheater, this moderately priced Northern Italian restaurant offers such dependable, fresh fare as Caesar salad, osso buco, and tirami su. *120 W. 41st St. (391-0805). (I) AE, DC, MC, V.*

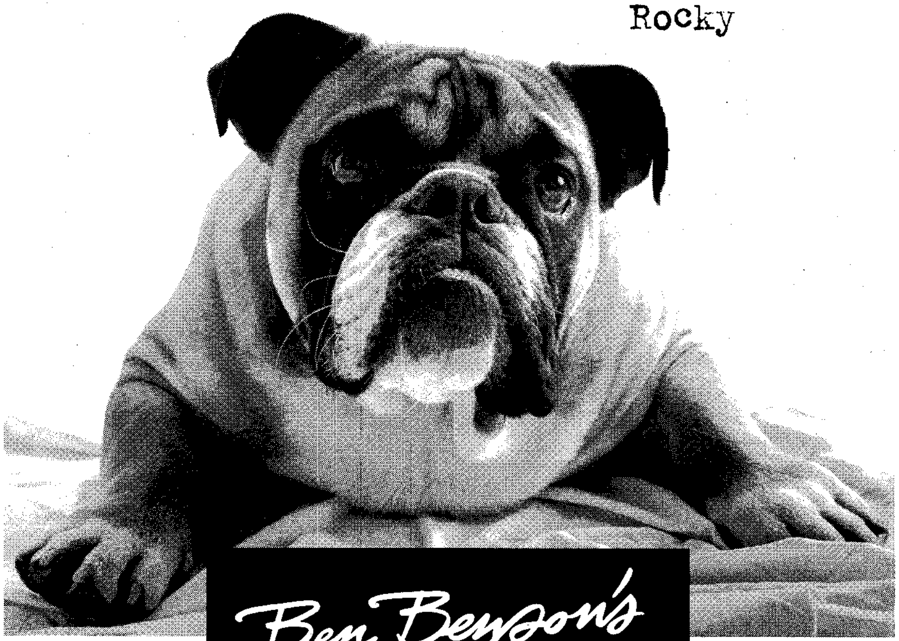
Soul Fixins'—Until now, this humble source of delicious soul food has been a convenient pit stop for lunch in the Penn Station–Macy's vicinity. Now house specialties like collard greens, macaroni and cheese, ribs, and sweet-potato pie are available for dinner or catered affairs. Closed weekends. *371 W. 34th St. (736-1345). (I) ($).*

Tap Room—New York's very first Austrian brewpub, with fresh lagers and pilsners on tap and a menu that indicates a seriousness about food that's rare in the microbrewery business. Goulash, spaetzle, Wiener schnitzel, and homemade sausages sound like the perfect accompaniments for beer. *3 W. 18th St. (691-7666). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

World Yacht—Take an out-of-town visitor to see the sights—all of them—over dinner. The luxury yacht boards at six, and sails from seven until ten. *Pier 81, W. 41st St. and the Hudson River (630-8100). (E) AE, MC, V.*

43rd–56th Streets, East Side

Caviar Russe—The owners of this caviar bar and boutique are also importers, which means that you're getting your Beluga—and golden Osetra, and Sevruga—right from the source. The petite



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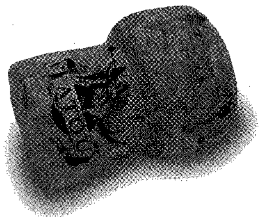

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restaurant ensconced in a midtown townhouse will gladly feed you a spoonful or a more substantial meal, like a foie gras sandwich with Armagnac-soaked figs, or steak tartare with baby-beet-and-black-truffle salad. Afternoon tea and prix fixe menus also available. *538 Madison Ave., nr. 54th St. (980-5908). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Cocktail Terrace at the Waldorf-Astoria—A convenient roost for a business breakfast or afternoon tea. At night, to accompany your cocktail, there's live piano music and the occasional fashion show. *301 Park Ave., at 50th St. (872-4818). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Domingo—The opera star's very own Spanish kitchen right in midtown Manhattan. Downstairs there's a Castilian-style tapas bar; upstairs, a more formal dining room with dramatic skylights. Drop in for churros y chocolate, or make a full meal of the regional Spanish specialties such as paella Valenciana. *209 E. 49th St. (826-8269). (M–E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Giambelli 50th Ristorante—Upscale Northern Italian fare served in a warm and cozy atmosphere. The chef imports esoteric varieties of pasta from Italy to prepare his specialties; the fish and meat dishes are as carefully considered. *46 E. 50th St. (688-2760). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Lespinasse—Marie Antoinette, where are you? This ultra-formal dining room in the St. Regis Hotel—think Versailles and you get the rococo drift—is where you'll find Gray Kunz's inventive Franco-Oriental cooking. The $44 prix fixe at lunch is a gentle introduction to exactly what wonders chef Kunz can perform. *2 E. 55th St., in the St. Regis Hotel (339-6719). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Monkey Bar—David Rockwell's glamorous renovation of this landmark bar retains the original murals and sconces, and the menu offers extremely contemporary renditions of American fare, like tuna tartare with mango and avocado, and baked lobster with smoked bacon, corn chowder, and pommes Anna. *60 E. 54th St. (838-2600). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Montebello—The staff at this cozy neighborhood restaurant offers a gracious welcome, while the kitchen provides upscale Northern Italian fare, especially affordable in the four-course pretheater menu. Specialties include angel's-hair pasta with fresh tomato and basil, and shrimp sautéed with cognac, broccoli, and red peppers. Private party room available. *120 E. 56th St. (753-1447). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Morton's of Chicago—This midwestern import has taken Manhattan by storm, winning converts with its tender double porterhouse and men's club charm. Hard to believe it's a chain. *551 Fifth Ave., at 45th St. (972-3315). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Naples 45 Ristorante e Pizzeria—This new, sprawling Italian restaurant and carry-out in the MetLife building serves authentic Neapolitan cuisine, including excellent thin-crust pizzas, baked to order by experienced pizza masters imported directly from Italy. Also try the twice-baked sandwiches and the wide array of wines by the glass. *200 Park Ave., at 45th St. (972-7001). (I–M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

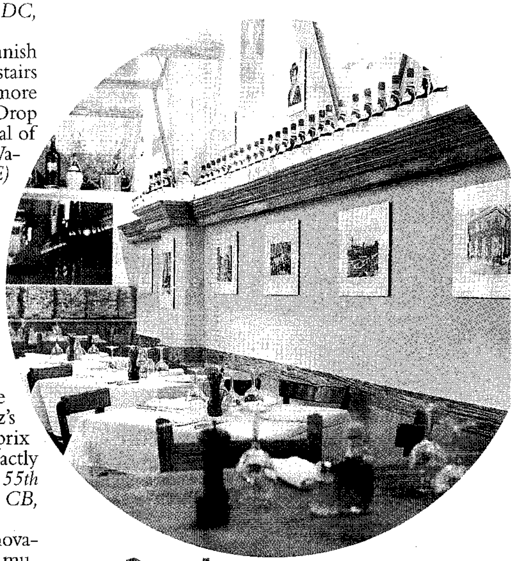
Shinbashi—After nearly a quarter of a century, this elegant Japanese restaurant is still an oasis in the frenzy of midtown. Owner Fumiko Hosoda offers a traditional menu of tempura, sukiyaki, teriyaki, and sushi, plus an array of chef's specialties. *280 Park Ave., at 48th St. (661-3915). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Tatou—Gilded-plaster satyrs, cherubs, jazz onstage, and New American cuisine. Executive chef Neal Myers, formerly of Ben Benson's, transports his expertise with meats and creatively prepared seafood, like pepper-crusted tuna with winter squash and black vinegar sauce, and crab cakes accompanied by cole slaw rolls. Try something from the extensive raw-bar menu. *151 E. 50th St. (753-1144). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

43rd–56th Streets, West Side

Barbetta—This elegant theater-district duplex is still owned, amazingly, by its founding family. The elaborate interior provides a peaceful background for regional specialties like fonduta, rabbit alla Piedmontese, and a variety of wild-game dishes. The garden is a summertime oasis. *321 W. 46th St. (246-9171). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Ben Benson's Steak House—This rollicking steakhouse has long fed hordes of hungry, beef-eating businessmen and the people who love them. The festive air gets pretty thick by the bar, where cigars prevail, but the dining room is entirely devoted to the consumption of standards like lobsters, crab cakes, veal, and four cuts of steak. Free validated parking available. *123 W. 52nd St. (581-8888). (E) AE, DS, MC, V.*



Opening
Soupy Sales

Despite its flavorful supply of bruschetta and panini, da Vittorio's spinoff Il Crostino seemed too take-out-oriented to develop much of a dinnertime crowd. So owner Vittorio Assante remodeled, installing a wine bar and a full kitchen for made-to-order meals. Renamed Osteria Ribollita, for the house special cabbage-and-bean soup, the newly reopened trattoria has kept its rustic feel and gentle ($15.50 and under) prices for pasta, entrée salads, and heartier dishes like roasted Cornish hen and veal scallopine with prosciutto and fontina. (260 Park Avenue South, near 21st Street; 982-0975.)

Broadway Joe—Located in a townhouse on Restaurant Row, this steakhouse serves a fourteen-ounce prime rib but also delivers fresh seafood and pasta for the omnivore. Hirschfeld caricatures cover the walls, so come find your NINAs while you dine. Discount dinner parking. Private parties. *315 W. 46th St. (246-6513). (M–E) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

C^2 at the China Club—The restaurant at the newly relocated China Club is conspicuously upscale for its Eighth Avenue address and surprisingly calm for its affiliation with the dance club upstairs. Chef Eban Ross has created an eclectic menu of Asian-influenced dishes like tuna-and-salmon tartare with daikon-hijiki slaw and braised lamb shank with maple-roasted acorn squash. *268 W. 47th St. (398-3800). (M–E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Christer's—Famous for its spectacular selection of salmon, this Scandinavian-inspired restaurant, designed by David Rockwell to resemble a colorful, cozy mountain lodge, is a great choice for contemporary renditions of seafood. Open Sundays. *145 W. 55th St. (974-7224). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Photograph by Amy Freeth.

Cité—An extravagant French steakhouse, marble and pewter with blazing chandeliers, and a more affordable grill next door. *120 W. 51st St. (956-7100). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

"44"—Still the first stop for the officers of the Condé Nast empire. Deeply plush, windowless décor feels like the center of the Earth. Given the theatricality, surprisingly terrific food. *44 W. 44th St., in the Royalton (944-8844). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Johnnie's—This small, old-world Italian restaurant has been a midtown fixture for over three and a half decades. The menu runs the gamut from basic pastas to chicken, veal, and seafood dishes; the $14.95 dinner special is a particularly good deal. *135 W. 45th St. (869-5565). (I–M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

La Crêpe de Bretagne—This midtown bistro specializes in crêpes, serving over 70 varieties, sweet and savory, plus French classics from bouillabaisse to cassoulet. *46 W. 56th St. (245-4565). (M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

La Veranda—Northern Italian food. A popular spot in the theater district offering generous portions of fish, seafood, veal chops and pasta. *163 W. 47th St. (391-0905). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Langan's—American cuisine in a clublike setting. Food ranges from Black Angus steaks to crab cakes and seafood. A trendy, well-heeled crowd at the much-frequented bar mixes with theatergoers in the dining room. *150 W. 47th St. (869-5482). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Lattanzi—Reliable Italian in a romantic garden. Go when there's no danger of a curtain rising or falling soon for special attention. *361 W. 46th St. (315-0980). (M) AE only.*

Le Bernardin—French-born Eric Ripert carries forth the quest of his predecessor, the late Gilbert Le Coze, for the world's most spectacular seafood. His ambitious signature dishes—scallops and foie gras with truffles, Spanish-style mackerel in Jerez vinegar, saddle of monkfish—have already won a very loyal following. *155 W. 51st St. (489-1515). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Les Pyrenées—French Provençal cuisine. Cassoulet from Toulouse recommended, as well as filet mignon and frogs' legs. A rustic atmosphere. A lot of theatergoers. *251 W. 51st St. (246-0044). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Martini's—Convenient for pre- and post-theater, with a buzzing year-round sidewalk café and chef Richard Krause's rustic homemade pastas, charcoal-grilled seafood, and wood-oven pizza. *810 Seventh Ave., at 53rd St. (767-1717). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Molyvos—This interpretive Greek restaurant a stone's throw from Carnegie Hall is a large, stylishly rustic showcase for chef Jim Botsacos's serious Mediterranean menu. Sit at one of the tables up front for drinks and meze, or indulge larger appetites with dishes like grilled octopus, rabbit stifado, and vegetable dolmades. *871 Seventh Ave., nr. 55th St. (582-7500). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

No. 18—During the day, this sleekly decorated midtown nook caters to the office crowd with an express lunch for an unusually-good-for-the-neighborhood price of $13. At night, it morphs into an atmospheric martini bar and dining room where an eclectic variety of flavorful, well-seasoned American fare is served. The risotto is highly acclaimed, and the $25 pretheater dinner is a bargain. *18 W. 56th St. (489-1888). (M–E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Osteria del Circo—The restaurant of the moment, partly because of its excellent bloodlines (Sirio Maccioni's brood of charming sons runs the place) and partly because of its flavorful, home-style Italian menu. Be sure to try anything created by proud mother (and food consultant) Mrs. Maccioni. *120 W. 55th St. (265-3636). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Pig and Whistle—This is midtown's notion of an Irish bar. A business clientele and a coming-and-going-to-the-theater crowd can find Irish specialties—both solid and liquid—here. *165 W. 47th St. (302-0112). (M) AE, MC, V.*

René Pujol—This theater-district oasis offers fine provincial French cooking in a sweet country-inn atmosphere. The conventionally familiar menu includes such specials as pan-seared duck breast with fruit chutney, steamed cod with coriander and ginger vinaigrette, and a salad of warm lobster, mesclun, and julienned vegetables. *321 W. 51st St. (246-3023). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Ruth's Chris Steakhouse—A steak cooked in butter is the centerpiece of this successful upscale chain's take-no-prisoners march east across the country. Steak served in a series of connected, muted, and wood-paneled dining rooms. *148 W. 51st St. (245-9600). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Stage Delicatessen—A landmark deli that serves gigantic sandwiches, every one of which is worth returning for. *834 Seventh Ave., nr. 54th St. (245-7850). (I) AE, MC, V.*

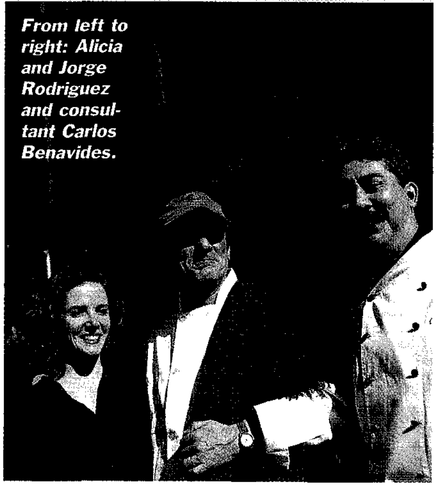
Tennessee Mountain Restaurant & Saloon—The midtown offshoot of a SoHo rib joint, this much larger duplex restaurant serves an extensive southern barbecue menu. Tchotchkes can be had at the "general store" souvenir stand, and cigar smokers have their own room in which to exhale. The barbecued and hickory-smoked ribs have already made a major impression on Manhattan meatlovers. *121 W. 45th St. (869-4545). (I–M) AE, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Texas Texas Restaurant & Saloon—This casual barbecue joint on a bustling Broadway corner attracts tourists and local office workers looking for af-

Opening

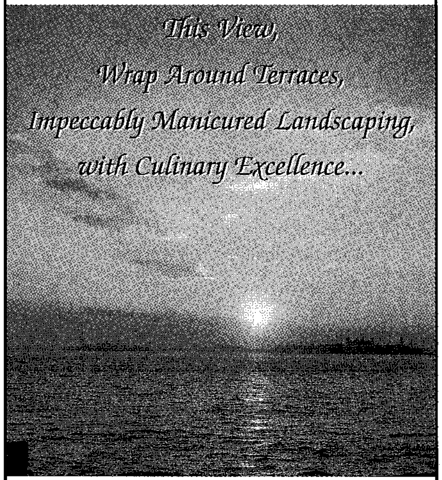
Pampa Yourself

Intent on expanding North Americans' taste for Argentine cuisine, chef Jorge Rodriguez and his wife, Alicia, open Chimichurri Grill this week with a menu of family favorites ("My Grandma's frittata," "My Mom's ravioli") and regional standouts (Patagonia toothfish). Weekly specials like puchero—a mélange of blood sausages, chicken, pancetta, cabbage, and root vegetables—and daily polentas are bolstered by a roster of beef cuts imported from the owners' Southern Hemisphere motherland. (606 Ninth Avenue, near 43rd Street; 586-8655.)


From left to right: Alicia and Jorge Rodriguez and consultant Carlos Benavides.

Photograph by Joe Fornabaio.

Imagine...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fordable southwestern grub like baby back ribs, plank-roasted salmon, and barbecued chicken. The CD player is programmed to play recordings by Texas artists only. *1600 Broadway, at 48th St. (956-7427). (I–M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Torre di Pisa—David Rockwell designed this midtown Italian import as a surreal version of the Leaning Tower. Pane fritto con prosciutto di Parma and fagotto al funghi porcini are examples of the chef's updated Tuscan standards. A separate cigar/smoking room is available for private parties. *19 W. 44th St. (398-4400). (E) AE, MC, V.*

Victor's Cafe 52—A venerable neighborhood haunt with tropical flair. Try the Cuban sandwich or the roast suckling pork. *236 W. 52nd St. (586-7714). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, TM, V.*

57th–60th Streets

Contrapunto—Join the queue in this good-looking, updated restaurant that's added a roster of sophisticated meat and seafood dishes to its renowned pastas. *200 E. 60th St. (751-8616). (M) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, TM, V.*

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven—The country's entertainment-industry glitterati make themselves right at home in I. M. Pei's monumental dining room. Susan Weaver is one of the only working chefs to combine contemporary presentation and technique with classic Provençal on one plate. The weekend bar scene puts the concept-hotel bar scene to shame. *57 E. 57th St. (758-5700). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Les Célébrités—Plush and old-fashioned, this imposing dining room in the Essex House on Central Park South also happens to have a very fine kitchen. Dinner only. *160 Central Park So. (484-5113). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

The Manhattan Ocean Club—Savor your seafood in an elegant dining room decorated with Picasso ceramics and Brazilian-red-cherry floors. *57 W. 58th St. (371-7777). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Rosa Mexicano—Did someone say "fresh-pomegranate margarita"? Yes, someone did. What's more, this spot prepares your guacamole tableside (a south-of-the-border hibachi?). Some of the tastier gourmet Mexican in the city. *1063 First Ave., at 58th St. (753-7407). (M) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

San Domenico—Toques off to owner Tony May, who may have done more for the cause of serious Italian cooking in New York than any other single restaurateur. His dining room is formal, and the food is wonderful. *240 Central Park So. (265-5959). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Two Rooms—You'd never expect it, but this landmark townhouse in the shadow of the Queensboro Bridge is home to an extremely eclectic establishment, with colonial African décor in the skylit upstairs restaurant and a fireplace in the low-key downstairs lounge. Some of the dishes on the contemporary American menu include seared duck foie gras, risotto of grilled sweet corn and pancetta, and crispy salmon in rice paper. *313 E. 58th St. (223-1886). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Above 60th Street, East Side

Allora—This cozy restaurant appeals to neighborhood regulars looking for gently priced Italian standards like osso buco and linguine pescatore. For the fish lover, crab cakes and Dover sole would make an ideal order. *1321 First Ave., at 71st St. (570-0384). (I) AE.*

Andrusha—Just because you live uptown doesn't mean you need to succumb to the relentless Chinese-and-pasta delivery routine. This understated restaurant serves a variety of Eastern European dishes, from the familiar (beef Stroganoff, blini with caviar or smoked fish) to the less so (Czech roast duck, coulibiac of vegetables). *1370 Lexington Ave., nr. 90th St. (369-9374). (M) DC, MC, V.*

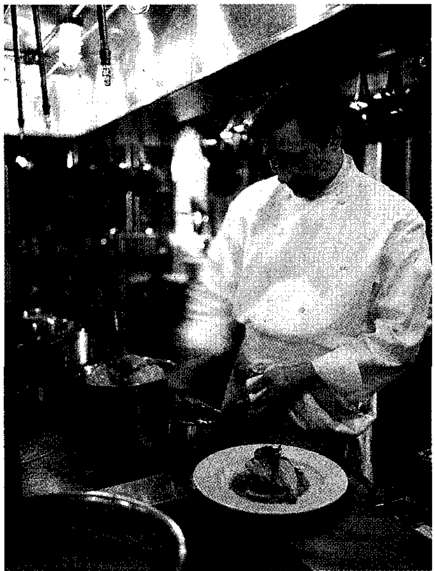
Club Macanudo—This plush, elegant shrine to cigar-smoking also offers, besides an astonishing selection of smokes, a sophisticated variety of edibles. The American menu, listing such offbeat items as warm lobster enchiladas and pork loin with coffee-barbecue sauce, takes inspiration from Latin and Caribbean cuisines. Jackets required. *26 E. 63rd St. (752-8200). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

El Pollo—This Peruvian chicken joint has stuck with its simple, minimal menu, to the benefit of this otherwise barren neighborhood. Potatoes come four ways, but you can't miss with the incredible curly fries. *1746 First Ave., nr. 90th St. (996-7810). (I) AE, CB, DC, MC, TM, V.*

Giovanni 25—This elegant regional Italian restaurant has a loyal neighborhood following that partakes of a menu heavy on game and dishes luxurified with seasonal truffles. Try the Dover sole and the black risotto with cuttlefish. *25 E. 83rd St. (988-7300). (M–E) AE, DS, MC, V.*

Hurricane Island—This American restaurant named for an island off the coast of Maine specializes, of course, in fresh lobster and seafood, and offers a better-than-average selection of microbrews with bottles from Belgium and Germany. *1303 Third Ave., at 75th St. (717-6600). (M) AE, MC, V.*

JoJo—The grilled chicken with chickpea frites is a great dish. But then, Jean-Georges Vongerichten doesn't make many mistakes in this elegant, jewel-like dining room situated on two floors of an East Sixties townhouse. Lunch upstairs, overlooking the street, is especially lovely. *160 E. 64th St. (223-5656). (E) AE, MC, V.*



ASK GAEL

I want to thrill a gourmand pal at lunch.

Surprise even the most jaded bon vivant with the cross-cultural dazzle chef Rocco DiSpirito delivers in the smartly spiffed-up ecology of Union Pacific. There, beyond a gentle waterfall, the two of you can sample Taylor Bay scallops nested in sea urchin with a hit of mustard oil, followed by crisp-edged skate with balsamic-tinged blood oranges or perfect chicken, the moist breast hiding flavorsome bits of thigh on silken potato purée with golden beets. The neighborhood has not yet found this oasis of noontime calm, so you can flirt and talk. Order à la carte or impress the accounting department with the three-course $19.98 prix fixe. [111 East 22nd Street; 995-8500.]

Photograph by Joe Fornabaio.

Mark's—Decked out like an English library, with plump, tasseled pillows to nest against. Fine East-West cooking and first-rate desserts. *25 E. 77th St., in the Mark Hotel (879-1864). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Mesa City—Bobby Flay's casual uptown bastion of innovative southwestern fare offers a unique variety of quesadillas, plus heartier dishes like ribs with molasses-barbecue sauce and sweet-potato tamale with spinach. The bar attracts regulars with the house margarita, spiked with cactus-pear juice, and its selection of twenty brands of tequila. *1059 Third Ave., nr. 62nd St. (207-1919). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Nino's—Elegant Italian with a romantic mural garden and nightly live entertainment. Try the grilled dishes—tuna on a bed of balsamic onions, double-cut veal chop—or the lobster fra diavolo. *1354 First Ave., nr. 72nd St. (988-0002). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Park Avenue Cafe—A polished, countrified American café for business lunches and off-duty get-to-know-yous in the evening. Chef David Burke makes the tired catchall "American fare" sing, and keeps the haute neighbors rapt with signature dishes like rack of lamb and his swordfish chop. *100 E. 63rd St. (644-1900). (E) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Penang—This Malaysian mini-dynasty began in Queens and has sprouted multiple Manhattan locations. Sample such exotic offerings as roti canai, beef rendang, and sarang burung in environs that strive to evoke the tropics. *1596 Second Ave., nr. 83rd St. (585-3838). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Post House—Clubby and comfortable, this handsome dining room specializes in good quality and big portions. The peppery Cajun-style steak is a favorite, especially with a side order of French fries or onion rings. There are dishes with decidedly less cholesterol—poached salmon, say, or lemon chicken—but this isn't a place to watch your waistline. Seriously. *28 E. 63rd St., in the Lowell Hotel (935-2888). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Primavera—This elegant uptown restaurant serves sophisticated renditions of Northern Italian food, like baby eels with oil and garlic, and roasted baby goat. The comfortable wood-paneled room, lit with antique fixtures and filled with fresh flowers, brings a touch of luxury to the neighborhood. *1578 First Ave., nr. 82nd St. (861-8608). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Above 60th Street, West Side

Gabriela's—Real Mexican food. Don't come here for bulging burritos, but for fragrant chicken soup, steamed tamales that taste like corn, and tender pork marinated in Seville orange juice and spices. Try the *licuados*, fruit shakes, and the *aguas frescas*, fresh-fruit drinks, to cool off. *685 Amsterdam Ave., at 93rd St. (961-0574). (I–M) AE, MC, V.*

La Caridad—Chino-Latino soul food in a neighborhood notoriously devoid of restaurant personality. Mammoth portions, enormous lines. *2199 Broadway, at 78th St. (874-2780). (I) ($).*

Londel's—Food cooked soulfully on a blooming strip off Strivers Row. Live music most nights and velvet rope at the front door create an ambience not often associated with home cooking. Try the smothered pork chops, but be forewarned: Everything's cooked to order—*slow*-cooked to order. *2620 Frederick Douglass Blvd., at 140th St. (234-6114). (I–M) CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Penang—This Malaysian mini-dynasty began in Queens and has sprouted multiple Manhattan locations. Sample such exotic offerings as roti canai, beef rendang, and sarang burung in environs that strive to evoke the tropics. *240 Columbus Ave., at 71st St. (769-3988). (M–E) AE, MC, V.*

Picholine—Chef Terrance Brennan's French-Mediterranean cuisine is as beautiful to look at as it is delicious to eat. Try the risotto, smoky with tender duck and wild mushrooms, and velvety foie gras with peach coulis, and save room for a glass of port to accompany the amazingly rich and well-chosen cheese course. *35 W. 64th St. (724-8585). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Restaurant 222—Cozy and romantic, with the feel of a townhouse, Frank Valenza's top-rated New American West Sider is a luxurious surprise in a neighborhood nearly bereft of them. The $42.50 dinner prix fixe, available Sunday through Thursday, is a great deal. *222 W. 79th St. (799-0400). (E) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Sarabeth's—This New York institution is a homey place for upscale down-home food like chicken potpie and pancakes. It also offers a children's menu and a mouth-watering bakery counter, with homemade, award-winning jams and preserves. *423 Amsterdam Ave., nr. 80th St. (496-6280). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Tavern on the Green—A must for your country cousin. This mazelike collection of dining rooms, each with a view of the park better than the previous one's, is worth cutting the hansom-cab ride short for. *Central Park at 67th St. (873-3200). (E) AE, CB, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Wells—A talked-about chicken-and-waffle combination. One way or another, this restaurant has been a neighborhood mainstay for nearly 60 years. *2247 Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd., at 132nd St. (234-0700). (M) AE, MC, V.*

West 63rd Street Steakhouse—Mahogany tables and red suede walls make this nice-ified steakhouse less stultifying than its midtown brethren. Twenty-foot ceilings allow for a spectacular view of Lincoln Center, and there are seafood and pasta for those who enjoy the company of a meat-eater. *44 W. 63rd St. (246-6363). (M) AE, DC, MC, V.*

Brooklyn

Casa Pepe—Mexican and Spanish fare meld in this elegant restaurant, with garden dining in fine weather and a fireplace to warm up the gray days of winter. The seafood-heavy menu finds best expression in the zarzuela de mariscos, the paella marinera, and the tacos Vera Cruz. *114 Bay Ridge Ave. (718-833-8865). (M) AE, DC, DS, MC, V.*

Cucina—A labor of love. Northern Italian in an elegant and very well appointed room. Sensational antipasti. *256 Fifth Ave., nr. Garfield Pl. (718-230-0711). (M) AE, MC, V.*

Lundy Bros.—This restored landmark restaurant serves a wide-ranging menu of fish, pasta, chicken, and steak but specializes in lobster and other varieties of seafood. Don't miss the oyster bar or the reconstructed shore dinner. Sunday brunch buffet available. *1901 Emmons Ave. (718-743-0022). (M) AE, MC, TM, V.*

Peter Luger's—Steak for one, steak for two, steak for four, and creamed spinach. Apply for your own house credit card, or bring cash. *178 Broadway, at Bedford Ave. (718-387-7400). (E) ($).*

The River Cafe—It's always worth crossing the bridge to sit waterside, enchanted by the skyline and a celebration of contemporary American cooking that predates the throng. Outdoor seating in season. *1 Water St. (718-522-5200). (E) AE, CB, DC, MC, V.*

Two Tom's—Firehouse-kitchen ambience and a waiter who tells you what you want to eat. The double-rib pork chops are peerless, and the escarole is great, too, but refuse the mercilessly overcooked pasta when it's offered. Eat early during the week and call ahead on weekends. Regular private parties make getting a table frustrating, but it's always worth the trouble. *255 Third Ave., nr. Union St. (718-875-8689). (I) ($).*

Queens

Elias Corner—Mix with the locals in Astoria as they queue up for a table at this Greek fish tavern. Don't wait for a menu; it won't come. Instead, eyeball the counter as you enter. If the offerings look like today's catch, they are. The owner fetches the fish each morning. Opt for the deep-fried, pinky-size bait fish over the squid. *24–01 31st St., at Astoria Blvd. (718-932-1510). (M) ($).*

Pearson's Texas Barbecue—Deservedly heralded as New York's best barbecue, this cozy Queens joint draws fans from much farther than across the East River. The barbecued Texas beef is sublime. *5-16 51st Ave., Long Island City (718-937-3030). (I) ($).*

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nightlife

Tibet House Benefit...Fatboy Slim

Concerts

The Allman Brothers Band—The hirsute Southerners work their way through a month's worth of chicken-fried boogie. Some young Deadheads may be following Phish around, but judging from the trippy "Peakin' at the Beacon" posters around town, we're guessing this is the real show for misguided-youth (not to mention middle- and old-age) watching. 3/6–3/8 and 3/10–3/11 at 8 P.M. *The Beacon Theatre, 2124 Broadway, at 75th St. (496-7070). Sold out.*

Bang on a Can—Performing, for the first time by anyone, ambient music's scoreless, 1977 ur-text—Brian Eno's *Music for Airports*. (See box, this page.) 3/7 at 8 P.M. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center.*

"Celtic Fiddle Festival"—Irishman Kevin Burke, Scot Johnny Cunningham, and Breton Christian Lemaitre are perhaps the leading practitioners of their regions' distinct Celtic styles. This three-way summit promises to be eye-opening. 3/7 at 8 P.M. *Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. (864-5400). $25.*

Harry Connick, Jr.—Some have called him schmaltzy, but the guy's got talent and class, and on his new, orchestral album, *To See You: Love Ballads,* he's also got romance. Backed by a 30-piece orchestra, New Orleans's favorite Frank Sinatra worshiper should have no problem filling this big room. 3/9–3/10 at 8 P.M. *Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center. (875-5000). $29.50–$45.*

Fatboy Slim—The British party-rock techno wizard gives up the goods (see page 87). 3/5 at 11 P.M. *Twilo, 530 W. 27th St. (268-1600). $17–$22.*

Jamie Foxx—The star of the WB's *Jamie Foxx Show* does stand-up. 3/7 at 8 P.M. *Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. (307-7171). $32–$44.50.*

Gay and Lesbian American Music Awards—The top-flight performers at this worthy ceremony make it the strongest contender to fill the Rudy-created Grammy void next year. Pianist Fred Hersch, *Rent* co-star Anthony Rapp, neo-folkie Toshi Reagon, and RuPaul will all be on hand to honor their confrères. Additionally, K.D. Lang will receive a lifetime-achievement award. 3/9 at 7 P.M. *Manhattan Center, 311 W. 34th St. (592-4455). $25–$100.*

"Go the Distance"—An AIDS benefit featuring the work of Broadway lyricist David Zippel, performed by Lucie Arnaz, Barbara Cook, Billy Porter, Debbie Gravitte, and well over a dozen other luminaries. 3/8 at 7 P.M. *92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100). $45–$250.*

Dick Hyman and George Shearing—This transatlantic piano summit brings together two of the greatest musicians of their generation. 3/7 at 8 P.M. *92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100). $25.*

Etta Jones and Houston Person—The great jazz-blues duo celebrate Women in Jazz Month. 3/6 at 8 and 10 P.M. *Flushing Town Hall, 137-35 Northern Boulevard (718-463-7700). $20.*

Liz Magnes—The Israeli jazz pianist blends Arab and Jewish musics into one rich sonic tapestry. 3/7 at 8:15 P.M. *Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (318-6100). $10.*

Jackie Mason—The Borscht Belt vet might have worn out his New York welcome as part of the irksome "Taxi Ten"—if he weren't so consistently hilarious. 3/10 at 8 P.M. *Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. (840-2824). $.*

Ground Rules:

In *clubland,* promptness is *not* next to godliness; expect shows to start much later than promised. $ = cash only.

Eros Ramazzotti—The Italian superstar gets the Michael Bolton demographic revved up with his formidable pipes. 3/6 at 8 P.M. *Radio City Music Hall, 1260 Avenue of the Americas, at 50th St. (307-7171). $.*

"Salute to Phil Woods"—Clark Terry, Bill Charlap, Vincent Herring, and a host of others pay homage to the man who most embodies Charlie Parker's spirit. 3/5 at 8 P.M. *The Pace Downtown Theater, 3 Spruce St. (346-1715). $20.*

Kartik Seshadri—The Ravi Shankar disciple gets some accompaniment for his virtuosic sitar work from youthful tabla master Arup Chatterjee. 3/6 at 8 P.M. *Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. (545-7536). $15.*

"Six Degrees of the Seventies"—Progeny of disco-generation masters perform the work of their forebears. Hence, Marvin Gaye III, Isaac Hayes III, and the Wilsonic members of Wilson-Phillips will be in the house, offering their takes on Motown soul-stirrers and dance-floor barn-burners alike. 3/6 at 8 P.M. *Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. (840-2824). $15–$25.*

Tibet House Sixth Annual Benefit—Before there was *Kundun,* or *Seven Years in Tibet,* or the Tibetan Freedom Concert, New York's avant-garde (and pop elite) were holding this midtown fund-raiser. This year's lineup features a few FM staples (Sheryl Crow, two members of York, Pennsylvania's, Live) who seem to have gotten on board after missing out on the Beastie Boys' summertime trend-in. Still, it's a first-rate night of music for a first-rate cause. Other performers include Brazilian folkie Caetano Veloso, West African diva Angelique Kidjo, Tibetan singer Yungchen Lhamo, plus regulars Philip Glass, Natalie Merchant, and John Cale. (See page 88.) 3/9 at 7:30 P.M. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave. at 57th St. (247-7800). $25–$100.*

Performance
Departure Zone

When Brian Eno recorded *Music for Airports* in 1978, he coined the term *ambient music* to describe its seemingly aimless ethereality. Eno has never played the all-synthesizer work live; he never even wrote out a score. And, he suggested paradoxically, listeners ought not *listen* to the 48-minute recording—or at least not pay strict attention to it. So a concert hall is about the last place you'd expect to find the opus. But March 7, genre-busting mavericks Bang on a Can (below) bring *Music for Airports*—arranged for strings, woodwinds, and other natural instruments—to Alice Tully Hall. If Bang on a Can's recent CD release of the piece is an indication, the concert should be anything but the yawn-inducer implied by Eno's self-deprecating instructions. Filled with fascinating textures and intricate, glacially paced structures, the piece is a flight to the far side of mood music.

Photograph by Klaus Schoenwiese.

Clubland

Arlene Grocery—The Lower East Side's newish, hippish, and appealingly inexpensive (okay, free) rock and folk venue. 3/4: Kevin Salem. 3/5: Matt Keating. 3/6: Virgin 2.0. 3/7: Johnny Society; Church of Betty. 3/9: Joy Askew. *95 Stanton St. (358-1633). $.*

Bottom Line—A top-notch venue—with great sound, good sight lines, and pretty decent fries—given to rock, jazz, and folk artists of all stripes. 3/3: James McMurtry; Fred Eaglesmith. 3/5: Loudon Wainwright III; Michael Hurley. 3/7: Jane Siberry; David Poe. 3/9: Steven McClintock; Gunnar Nelson; Matthew Nelson; Victoria Shaw. 3/10: Stockton's Wing. *15 W. 4th St. (228-7880).*

CBGB & OMFUG—Ground zero of punk's State-side explosion and, twenty years later, still a smoking, flyer-strewn pit—in a good way. Dig the new, un-scuzzy basement lounge. 3/4: Tattoo-scalped, maudlin East Village folk-popper Daniel Cartier. *315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052). $.*

Chicago B.L.U.E.S.—A downtown blueserie, comfortably down-home, with living-room couches behind the stage. Dedicated to bringing us the best and brightest from the midwestern blues capital. 3/6–3/7: Johnnie Johnson. *73 Eighth Ave., bet. 13th and 14th Sts. (924-9755). $.*

Coney Island High—Originally a glam-trash revival hall, this two-level East Village funhouse now reflects the neighborhood's cultural diversity, with indie-rock and punk bands sharing the venue with some of the city's wackiest parties. 3/4: The Ventures. 3/5: Erstwhile Replacements *wunderkind* Tommy Stinson. 3/7: The Groovie Ghoulies; the Donnas; the Primadonnas. 3/8: Shift. 3/9: Six Feet Under. *15 St. Marks Pl. (674-7959).*

The Cooler—The meatpacking district's subterranean, steel-corridored home to alternative rockers, avant-garde-jazz musicians, and mind-expanding D.J.'s. A sleekly refurbished meat locker with black light, moody atmosphere, and a Patti Smith photo. 3/5: Family of God; Every Mother's Son. 3/6: Soul-jazz vibes maestro Roy Ayers. 3/7: Hassan Hakmoun & Zahar; Floyd Lloyd & the Blue People. 3/9: Honeychild. *416 W. 14th St. (229-0785).*

Fez—Mingus fever and lush *faux*-Moroccan ambience make this the neo-boho place to be on Thursdays, when the mighty Mingus Big Band rocks the house, playing the works of the great, brawling jazz bassist with a freshness and authority rarely seen in jazz today. Hidden beneath the Time Cafe, Fez takes some ambition and assertiveness to access on a crowded night. Wednesday's year-old comedy revue "Stella" continues to deliver some of the finest young stand-up talent in the city. The Sun Ra Arkestra swings on in joyful idiosyncrasy Sunday nights through February and March. 3/9: Daniel Harnett. 3/10: Gary Negbaur; Bill Parsons. *Time Cafe, 380 Lafayette St. (533-2680).*

Irving Plaza—A midsize bi-level rock venue with moody chandeliers and a sort of haunted-bordello look. It's a bit of a crush near the stage, but there's an amiable bar, 119, right around the corner for a preshow aperitif. "Savoy Sundays" are weekly swingfests of ballroom dancing.3/3–3/4: Reel Big Fish; Mr. T Experience; Pilfers. 3/5: Gov't Mule. *17 Irving Pl. (777-6800).*

Knitting Factory—The Disneyland of downtown music, with three floors, two stages, two microbrew-bearing bars, and some of the biggest names in now music. 3/3–3/4: In a reprise of last year's delightfully oddball *Individually Twisted* album, the loopily avant-garde Jazz Passengers team up with seventies downtown icon Deborah Harry. 3/5: Princess Superstar. 3/6: Leon Parker. 3/7: Low-fi orchestral pop nuts Neutral Milk Hotel; the Music Tapes. 3/9: Joseph Bowie's Funkshop. *74 Leonard St., bet. Broadway and Church St. (219-3055).*

Life—Okay, we give. It *is* the only hip place on Bleecker Street, even if the doormen can get a little tough on those they deem unworthy. What bouncers aren't? *158 Bleecker St. (420-1999).*

Manny's Car Wash—A little Chicago on the Upper East Side. Mondays, beware salivating yuppie swells here for ladies' night. Every Sunday, it's Manny's World Famous Blues. 3/3: Benefit for Stan Bronstein. 3/4: Kenny Neal. 3/6: The Water Street Blues Band. *1558 Third Ave., bet. 87th and 88th Sts. (369-BLUES).*

Mercury Lounge—Once a headstone parlor, now one of the city's hippest and most congenial music spots, hosting rock and country artists groomed for the more au courant time slots of MTV. 3/3: Marcus Wolf. 3/4: Semisonic; Athanaeum. 3/5: Mini King. 3/6: Rogue's March. 3/7: Sam Bisbee; John Easdale; Gary Lucas. 3/9: Betty; Moist. 3/10: Candy Butchers. *217 E. Houston St. (260-4700).*

S.O.B.'s—The city's premier world-music venue, presenting many acts that could fill stadia back home. Most nights, sets at 10 and midnight. 3/3: Capleton and Anthony B. 3/4: Ralph Irrizary with Timbalaya. 3/5: The monthly Indian-film-music dance blowout Basement Bhangra gets palms in the air and hips swaying. 3/6: Maysa, the former voice of Incognito; local zouk heroes Tabou Combo. 3/7: Katende. 3/9: Eddie Palmieri. 3/10: Tony Rebel. *204 Varick St. (243-4940).*

The Supper Club—A large, grand ballroom with a starry ceiling and challenging acoustics. Every Friday and Saturday, the Tony Corbiscello Big Band gets the room swinging, lindy-hopping, and otherwise engaging in social behaviors of yesteryear (look for guest appearances by John Pizzarelli and other bona fide big names), after which the next generation takes over, to ever-more-vigorous dancing. The Flying Neutrinos play Saturday evenings in January. Too much hopping got you pooped? Take a load off in the upstairs Blue Room Lounge. *240 W. 47th St. (921-1940).*

Tramps—One of the city's better venues for great roots music and happening indie rock, Tramps eschews high concept for straightforward presentation. Avoid the neck-craning mid-stage column by arriving early. 3/5: Big Wreck; Black Lab; the Tea Party. 3/6: Milo Z. 3/7: Marcia Ball; Tracy Nelson; Irma Thomas. 3/8: Rosie LeDet, "the Zydeco Sweetheart." *51 W. 21st St. (727-7788).*

Wetlands—Rapper Rahzell is the secret weapon in the arsenal of Philadelphia rap outfit the Roots. Justifiably nicknamed "Godfather of Noize," Rahzell rivals his outfit's fearsome rhythm section for sonic and metric versatility—the key difference being that Rahzell makes all his music with his mouth alone. Whether delivering a simple beat-box riff, mimicking any of the hundreds of classic rap tunes in his repertoire (backup singers and all), or dishing out playful originals, Rahzell is one of the most impressive vocalists in any genre, hands down. He puts on one of his amazing solo shows, 3/8. 3/4: Thirtieth-anniversary revival of *Hair*. *161 Hudson St. (966-5244).*

Jazz

Birdland—More comfortable than the Blue Note, swankier than the Vanguard, and proof that jazz is alive and well in midtown, this classy boîte serves up some fine southern cuisine along with its first-rate lineup. Every Monday night, the Toshiko Akiyoshi Jazz Orchestra. Every Friday the Lew Anderson Big Band swings from 5:30 to 7:30. 3/3: The Famous Duke Ellington Orchestra. 3/4: Herbie Nichols Project. 3/5–3/7: Freddie Hubbard Quintet. 3/8: Chico O'Farrill Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra. 3/10: The Duke Ellington Orchestra, conducted by 19-year-old Paul Ellington. Sets at 9 and 11 P.M. *315 W. 44th St. (581-3080).*

Blue Note—With a first-rate sound system and a decent view from every seat in the house, the "jazz capital of the world" often presents two top-flight artists in one evening. Sets at 9 and 11:30 P.M. 3/3–3/8: McCoy Tyner Trio & the Latin Jazz All-Stars Feat. *131 W. 3rd St. (475-8592).*

Dharma—An elegant little gem of a club, serving funky jazz on the historic shopping thoroughfare—just don't pay retail. *174 Orchard St., bet. Houston and Stanton. (780-0313).*

Iridium—Merlot, the artfully wacky restaurant across from Lincoln Center, hosts some formidable jazz comers in its cozy basement, along with the occasional legend. Monday nights, the Les Paul Trio holds office hours. 3/3–3/8: Charlie Haden & Kenny Barron. Sets at 8:30 and 10:30, Sun.–Thurs., with extra midnight set Fri. and Sat. *44 W. 63rd St., across from Lincoln Center (582-2121).*

"Jazz at Noon"—East midtown's long-running, Friday-afternoon jam session—where Dizzy Gillespie, Clark Terry, and Elvin Jones have all been visiting scholars—returns for its thirty-third season, with the usual high-caliber house band. Noon–2:30 P.M. 3/6: Harold Ousley. $5 cover. *San Martin Restaurant, 143 E. 49th St. (832-0888).*

The Jazz Standard—Midtown south's newest, biggest, and happeningest hangout for hard-boppers and the men and women who love them. You can't hear the bands from the swanky first-floor restaurant, but the basement club's modified menu should more than suffice. 3/3–3/8: Cecil Payne & the Bebop Generation Sextet. Sets Sun., Tues.–Thurs. at 8 P.M. and 10 P.M., Fri. and Sat. at 8 P.M., 10:30 P.M., and midnight; $10–$15 cover on weekdays, $15–$20 cover on Fri. and Sat. *116 E. 27th St. (576-2232).*

Knickerbocker Bar & Grill—A wood-paneled and brass-railed restaurant with Old New York ambience and excellent—occasionally legendary—pianists. 3/4–3/7: Mike LeDonne and Jon Webber. *33 University Pl. (228-8490).*

Small's—Extremely cozy and open all night, offering after-hours jazz until 8 A.M. It's a candlelit basement whose nightly jams start round about 2 A.M.—the perfect time for a post–Village Vanguard visit (it's right around the corner)—and often involve free beverages and food. Every Sunday, the Jazz Composers Forum, followed by the Across Seventh Street Septet. Every Monday, Jason Lindner's youthful, Ellington-meets-Mingus big band. Tuesdays, cerebral and atmospheric guitarist Kurt Rosenwinkel leads his quartet. Shows start at 10 P.M. *183 W. 10th St. (929-7565). $.*

Sweet Basil—An intimate downtown restaurant with good food and high-profile jazz acts. Every

Talent

Fat Beats

For music that's supposed to keep you dancing all night, techno can be cold, humorless, or just plain tedious. Enter Norman Cook—a.k.a. Fatboy Slim—a techno D.J. from Brighton, England, whose mission, he says, "is to have more fun than everybody else. I'm 34 years old, and I still don't seem to have grown up." Slim's debut, *Better Living Through Chemistry*, is a party-album romp that uses block-rockin' beats and surging synth lines as the backdrop for damaged-sounding Yvonne Elliman samples, Michael Jackson jabs, and goofy beer-commercial declarations like "The weekend starts here." After spending the late eighties playing bass for guitar-poppers the Housemartins, Cook returned to his first musical love, D.J.'ing. At first, he says, "it was really hard to find enough music to D.J. a two-hour set. So I made the records I needed—that was the motivation behind the album." When Cook spins March 5 at Twilo, in a rare U.S. gig, expect a blowout. "Normally by the end of the night I've got totally carried away," he says. "I've taken me shirt off and I'm swingin' me arms around in the air." And if the crowd doesn't get the Fatboy vibe? "I never give up," he insists good-naturedly. "No matter how moody the place is. I never go, 'Oh, fuck you then.' I'm always like, 'Oh, you didn't like that? Try *THIS!!*' " Cook has begun work on his second album, and while the new disc doesn't have a title yet, he promises it'll be similar to *Chemistry*—with a few notable differences. "It'll be bigger," Cook says. "Noisier. More stupid."

ETHAN SMITH

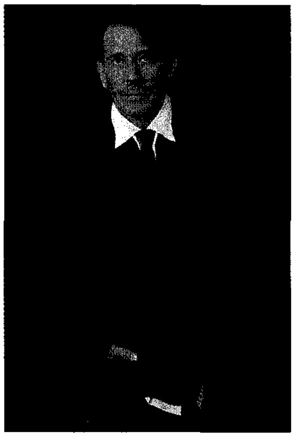
Brighton lights, big city: *Fatboy Slim* feels the funk.

Photograph by Gavin Wilson.

Saturday, jazz brunch with Ilhan Ersahin. Sundays, Chuck Folds hosts "the original jazz brunch." Every Monday, it's the Spirit of Life Ensemble. Sets at 9 and 11 P.M., with extra sets Fri. and Sat. at 12:30 A.M. 3/3–3/8: Oliver Lake Quintet. *88 Seventh Ave. So., at Bleecker St. (242-1785).*

Tavern on the Green—A somewhat overwrought restaurant in a touristy Central Park rest stop, the Tavern's Chestnut Room is still a top-flight jazz club—with excellent sound and a full roster of stars. 3/3–3/7: Avishai Cohen Trio. *Central Park at W. 67th St. (873-3200).*

Village Vanguard—Perhaps the world's greatest jazz club, and certainly the most steeped in history, this dark, smoky institution is revered by fans around the world. Study the photos of jazz icons, dig the curtains Miles Davis once played to, and sneak a glance inside the kitchen, an Algonquin Round Table for the bop age. Mondays, the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra swings on. Sets at 9:30 and 11:30 P.M. 3/3–3/8: Tom Harrell Septet. *178 Seventh Ave. So., at W. 11th St. (255-4037). $.*



Performance
Live at Buddha-thon

The sixth annual Tibet House Benefit Concert offers the usual assortment of downtown worthies—John Cale (above), Patti Smith, Philip Glass—and a few freshly enlightened neophytes (Sheryl Crow, left; Live, below). Carnegie Hall, March 9.

Comedy

Boston Comedy Club—*Animal House* ambience and, most nights, comedy to match. Sundays: "All Star Comedy." Mondays: Open-mike night hosted by David J. Tuesday–Thursday, shows at 9:30 P.M. Fridays and Saturdays, the club promises "the country's top comedians," with shows at 8, 10, and midnight. *82 W. 3rd St. (477-1000).*

Carolines Comedy Club—In Times Square just down the street from the *Letterman* show, Carolines hosts big names and talented up-and-comers in its wide, elegant, TV-studio-like basement. The Knicks' No. 1 elbow-thrower and trash-talker lightens up for the NBA all-star game weekend with "Charles Oakley's All-Star Comedy Bash," Mondays and Tuesdays, "New Talent Night," hosted by Eddie Brill. *1626 Broadway, bet. 49th and 50th Sts. (757-4100). $12.50–$18.50, two-drink minimum.*

Catch a Rising Star—The high-class variety showplace has broadened its focus from straight standup to a mix of sketch and alternative comedy, theater, and musical performances. Friday's "The Big Bad Music Show" explores that riskiest of all entertainment territory, humor-rock. Shows Tues. at 8:30 P.M.; Wed. and Thurs. at 9 P.M.; Fri. and Sat. at 9 and 11 P.M. *253 W. 28th St., (244-3005).*

Chicago City Limits—The long-running and much-ballyhooed troupe, performing their latest, "@ChicagoCityLimits.comedy." Wed.–Thurs. at 8:30 P.M., Fri.–Sat. at 8:30 and 10:30 P.M. $20 cover. *Chicago City Limits Theatre, 1105 First Ave., at 61st St. (888-LAFF).*

Comedy Cellar—A physical throwback to sixties Village coffeehouses, this is the late-night subterranean haunt of many of the city's top comics. Shows Fri. at 9 and 11 P.M.; Sat. at 8:30 P.M., 10:15 P.M., and 12 A.M.; and Sun–Thurs. at 9 P.M. 3/2–3/8: Colin Quinn; Kevin Brennan; Al Lubel; Greg Giraldo; Pete Coreale; Jim David. *117 MacDougal St. (254-3480).*

Comic Strip—Probably the most expertly booked club in the city, this showcase offers an eclectic mix of comedians every night of the week. *1568 Second Ave., bet. 81st and 82nd Sts. (861-9386).*

Dangerfield's—Founded by the respect-deprived comedian two decades ago, this Vegas-style lounge is one of the city's oldest comedy establishments. Fri. at 9 and 11:15 P.M.; Sat. at 8 P.M., 10:30 P.M., and 12:30 A.M.; Sun.–Thurs., continuous from 8:45 P.M. Cover is $15 Fri. and Sat.; $12.50 on weeknights; no minimum. *1118 First Ave., bet. 61st and 62nd Sts. (593-1650).*

Gotham—An elegant, trendy, and palatial comedy spot in the Flatiron district. Sun.–Thurs. at 8:30 P.M.; Fri. at 9 and 11P.M. and Sat. at 8:30 and 10:30 P.M. Cover is $12 Fri. and Sat., $8 on weeknights. Two-drink minimum. 3/6-3/7: Joe Mulligan; JR Havlan; Joe Materese. *34 W. 22nd St. (367-9000).*

Luna Lounge—Monday night's "Eating It" presents young hip comedians, for free. *171 Ludlow St. (260-2323).*

Stand-up New York—Robin Williams is known to drop by here unannounced to warm up for his *Letterman* appearances. Shows: Sun.–Thurs. at 7; Fri.–Sat. at 7, 9, and 11:30 P.M. $7–$12 cover. 3/6–3/7: Al Ducharme; Greg Giraldo; Eddie Brill; Susie Essman. 236 W. 78th St. (595-0850).

Surf Reality—The Lower East Side's fave spot for sketch and improv, slackerly and otherwise. 3/6: The all-female "Twistfest" takes a warmup spin before next week's uptown opening at Carolines. *172 Allen St., second floor. (673-4182). $.*

Cabaret

Arci's Place—Dinner, dancing, and piano-playing crooners. Mon.–Tues. Larry Ham plays solo at 5:30 P.M., Wed. at 7 P.M., and Fri.–Sat. at 9 P.M., Mike Cerrati and his trio play. Thurs. is a cabaret crap-shoot: Take what you get. No cover. *450 Park Ave., at 30th St. (532-4370).*

Asti—Singing-waiter frolics, with an emphasis on opera and operetta, are the keynote of this Village landmark. *13 E. 12th St. (741-9105).*

Bemelmans Bar—Through 5/2: Peter Mintun. $10 music charge; no minimum. *Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600).*

Cafe Carlyle—Starting 3/10, Dixie Carter, Tues.–Sat. Every Monday, Woody Allen swings through the early set with Eddy Davis & His New Orleans Jazz Band. Sets at 8:45 and 10:45 P.M. $50 ($25 for Davis's late, Woody-free set); no minimum. *Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600).*

Cafe Pierre—Singer-pianist Kathleen Landis. $12 minimum; jacket and tie required. *Fifth Ave. at 61st St. (940-8195).*

Danny's Skylight Room—Thurs.–Sun., through March, Blossom Dearie's back in town. Every Monday and Tuesday, Ronny Whyte is in the piano bar. $6–$15, plus $10 minimum. *346 W. 46th St. (265-8130).*

Don't Tell Mama—What better way to wind down after an evening of overwrought Broadway fare than some understated cabaret? 3/7: Clive Baldwin, who unapologetically calls himself the "World's Greatest Minstrel." Funny, we thought that title belonged to the Beastie Boys. 3/6–4/24: Jamie deRoy and friends. 3/3: Scott Coulter's "Remember the Magic." 3/9: Cabaret satirists Max and Maxine, with musical director Shecky Sheckenstein. $10–$15 cover, two-drink minimum. *343 W. 46th St. (757-0788). $.*

Eighty-Eight's—A West Village venue whose unassuming façade conceals a top-notch little theater within. Sundays, Rohn Seykell continues his wildly popular run. 3/3: Steve Hayes and Tom Cayler. Starting 3/5: Anne Tofflemire with "Let's Face the Music." $15, with a two-drink minimum. *228 W. 10th St. (924-0088).*

FireBird Café—The theater district's newest post-show snuggery. Through Valentine's Day, KT Sullivan and Jeff Harnar star in "Two for Tonight." 3/3–3/7: Yanna Avis and Colin Romoff. Tues.–Thurs., sets at 9 P.M. Fri. and Sat., sets at 9 and 11 P.M. $30 cover; two-drink minimum. *363 W. 46th St. (586-0244).*

Judys Restaurant and Cabaret—Every Saturday through April 25, Judy Kreston and David Lahm perform *My One and Only Love*—surprisingly, a love-themed collection of standards and originals. Sets at 9 P.M. $15 cover; $10 minimum. *49 W. 44th St. (764-8930).*

The Park—Tenor Chris Barrett serves up chestnuts of the American songbook in this swanky midtown lounge. No cover; no minimum. *109 E. 56th St. (750-5656).*

Rainbow and Stars—Romance, prewar charm, and wood paneling, hundreds of feet above midtown. Tues.–Sat. at 8:30 and 11 P.M.; seating for dinner is at 6:30 P.M. Through 3/28: "Rhythm On The Rainbow . . . The Hot Harmonies of the Boswell Sisters." *30 Rockefeller Plaza, 65th floor (632-5000).*

Sardi's—Starting 3/6: The John Malino Band. Starting 3/9: Comic, singer, dancer, and pianist Mark Nadler performs numbers from his 3,000-song repertoire of standards, show tunes, and other theater-district fare. $15 cover; $12 minimum. *234 W. 44th St. (221-8444).*

"Secrets Every Smart Traveler Should Know"—In the tradition of *Forbidden Broadway* comes Stan Freeman and Jay Leonhart's new broad slapstick 'n' show-tunes revue. Zeroing in on tourism's wacky cross-cultural misunderstandings may not be quite the precision exercise the old West 72nd Street warhorse's fearless parodizing was. But does anybody go to dinner theater expecting subtlety? Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Fri. at 8 P.M.; Sat. at 7:30 and 10:30 P.M.; Sun. at 3 and 7:30 P.M. $40 cover. *Triad Theatre, 158 W. 72nd St. (799-4599).*

Bars

Chez Es Saada—A subterranean orientalist fantasia, replete with fountains, Egyptian pop on the sound system, and exotic drinks with unpronounceable names. Don't be misled by the lack of street-level signage, though: Chez Es Saada is no trendoid-free oasis, and on weekends the bouncers give entry preference to Euro-partyers. *42 E. 1st St. (777-5617).*

Photographs: top to bottom, courtesy of P.O.W.; Guzman; Danny Clinch.

in concert

Lohengrin Opens at the Met

Classical Music

Tuesday, March 3

Magellan String Quartet—Performs Haydn, George Crumb, and Schubert. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 2; $8.50.*

Wednesday, March 4

New York Virtuosi—Performs Poulenc's *Barbar,* with Werner Klemperer, narrator. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 8; $20.*

Ancient Music at St. Bartholomew's—Todd Wilson performs a concert on the largest pipe organ in the city. *St. Bartholomew's, 109 E. 50th St. (378-0248), at 7; $10–$20.*

Thursday, March 5

New York Philharmonic—Performs Mussorgsky, Prokofiev, and Tchaikovsky, with Glenn Dicterow, violin; Yuri Temirkanov, conductor. *Avery Fisher Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $20–$75.*

Houston Symphony Orchestra—Performs Dvořák, Tchaikovsky, and Stravinsky; Christoph Esenbach, conductor. *Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 8; $15–$50.*

New Sounds—Performances by Alicia Svigals & Ensemble, as well as the Masada String Trio. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 8; $17.50.*

Musica de Camara—Performs Beethoven, Mozart, and Strauss. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 8; $15.*

Bargemusic—Quartet performances of Schubert, Schumann, Prokofiev, and Brahms. *Fulton Ferry Landing, under the Brooklyn Bridge, Brooklyn (718-624-4061), at 7:30; $20–$30.*

Friday, March 6

Eros Ramazzotti, Vocalist—The Italian superstar performs works from his recent album, *Eros. Radio City Music Hall, 1260 Sixth Ave., at 51st St. (307-7171).*

New York Philharmonic—See 3/5, at 11.

Saturday, March 7

Mi-Jung Im, Piano—Performs Rachmaninoff and Haydn. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 8; $20.*

Opera East—Performs selections from Russian operas by Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky, Rachmaninoff, Borodin, and Prokofiev. *Broadway Presbyterian Church, 114th St. and Broadway (288-8770), at 8; $10.*

New York Philharmonic—See 3/5.

Sunday, March 8

American Composers Orchestra—Performs music from Argentina, including Astor Piazzola's Concerto for Bandoneon and Orchestra; Dennis Russell Davies, conductor. *Weill Recital Hall, Carnegie Hall, 881 Seventh Ave., at 57th St. (247-7800), at 8; $30.*

Dessoff Choirs—Perform works by Paul Moravec, Robert Convery, and Chris Deblasio. *Merkin Concert Hall, Abraham Goodman House, 129 W. 67th St. (501-3330), at 3; $20.*

Vogler Quartet of Berlin—Performs Beethoven and Smetana. *Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 11; $15.*

Michael Schade, Tenor—Performs songs by Bach, Mozart, and Schumann with Russell Braun, tenor. *Alice Tully Hall, Lincoln Center (875-5000), at 2; $32.*

Bargemusic—See 3/5, at 4.

Monday, March 9

Da Camera—Performs surrealist musical works, including pieces by Poulenc, Antheil, and Eric Satie, with William Sharp, baritone. *Walter Reade Theater, Lincoln Center (871-6500), at 7:30; $25.*

Opera

Metropolitan Opera—Performs Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffman,* 3/3 at 7:30 and 3/6 at 8; Puccini's *Madama Butterfly,* 3/7 at 1:30; Saint-Saëns's *Samson et Dalila,* 3/4 and 3/7 at 8; and Wagner's *Lohengrin,* 3/9 at 6:30 (first night). *Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center (362-6000); $24–$200.*

Amato Opera—Performs Verdi's *Rigoletto,* 3/7 at 7:30 and 3/8 at 2:30. *319 Bowery (228-8200); $20.*

Dance

Paul Taylor—Performs two new works, *Piazzolla Caldera* and *The Word,* 3/3–3/9. *City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (581-1212); $15–$50.*

O Vertigo—Performs *La Bête,* 3/3–3/8. *Joyce Theater, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. (242-0800); $28.*

Forever Tango—The Argentine form, interpreted by Luis Bravo. *Walter Kerr Theater, 218 W. 48th St. (239-6200); $30–$65.*

New Stuff Festival—Works by Dura Mater, Toshiko Oiwa, Michael Portnoy, and Andrea Smith, through 3/8, at 8. *P.S. 122, 150 First Ave. (477-5288); $15.*

Harkness Dance Project—The series begins this week, with performances by Bill Young and Dancers, 3/7–3/10 at 8. *92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $15.*

Fridays at Noon—New choreography by Nina David, Marianna Tasartolia, and John Passasiune, 3/6. *92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); free.*

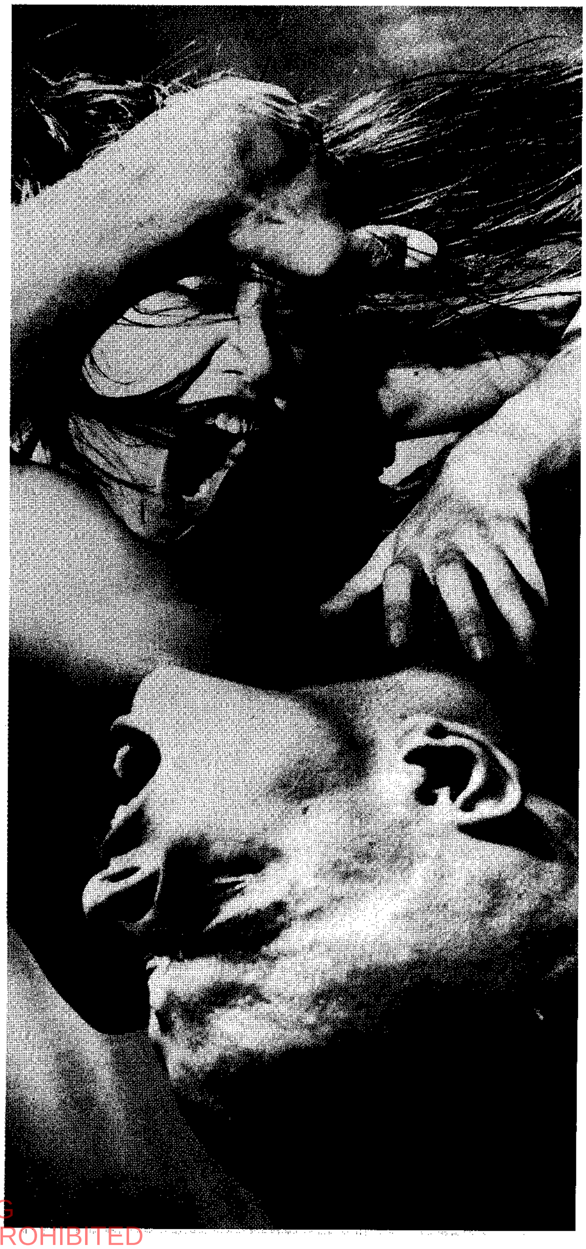
Ground Rules:

This section emphasizes classical concerts, recitals, and public square/park performances (but only the premeditated ones), and includes the occasional jazz concert if it is held, say, outdoors or in a public space. For rock concerts and club information, see "Nightlife."

Previews
Two-Faced

The dancers in O Vertigo have been exploring their inner demons, and these dark expressions are now the basis for *La Bête* (*The Beast Within*), right, an evening-length dance piece to be performed this week at the Joyce. The Montreal-based troupe, led by Ginette Laurin, incorporates flamenco, tango, and dances from African and Indian tribes in its startlingly frenetic choreography. Opens March 3.

Photograph by Rolline Laporte.



the mix

Doctorow on *Ragtime*...Lost Cities

Radio Highlights

Casper Citron—Saturdays at 10 P.M. 3/7: Lewis D. Schiliro, the newly appointed assistant director of the FBI heading the New York office; Karen Mason is joined by Skitch Henderson in discussing their appearance at Carnegie Hall; Walter Anderson, editor of *Parade* magazine; Francine Halvorsen on *Eating Around the World: In Your Neighborhood*. WOR, 710 AM.

New York & Company—Weekdays at 2 P.M. 3/2: Elinor Burkett; Waldy Malouf; Jean-Marc Sarazin. 3/3: Michael Ignatieff; Micha Bar-Am; Marilyn Webb 3/4: Jill Eikenberry and Stuart Tucker; Nina Seavey. 3/5: John Hess; Russell Banks; John Sayles. 3/6: Paul Sand and Lewis Stadlen. Leonard Lopate is the host. WNYC AM; 820.

The Lewis Burke Frumkes Show—Sundays at 8 P.M. 3/8: The guest is Deborah Garrison, author of *A Working Girl Can't Win*. WNWK, 105.9 FM.

The Written Word

NYU's Fiction Alumni Reading—3/6 at 7 P.M.: With Patricia Chao, Karin Cook, Cassandra Garbus, and Jillian Medoff. Jurow Hall, 32 Waverly Pl. (998-8816); free.

Festival of Quebec Authors—3/4 at 6 P.M.: Reading from their work. Mid-Manhattan Library, 455 Fifth Ave., at 40th St. (221-7676); free.

Shane—3/9 at 7:30 P.M.: The Manhattan Theatre Club's Writers in Performance present a reading from Jack Schaefer's novel. City Center, 131 W. 55th St. (399-3030); $12.

Larry King—3/10 at 8 P.M.: Discusses *Future Talk*. 92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $18.

Paul Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger—3/2 at 6 P.M.: Reading from *The Art of Speedreading People*. Borders Books & Music, 5 World Trade Center bet. Church and Vesey Sts. (522-6810); free.

Aharon Appelfeld—3/10 at 7:30 P.M.: The Israeli novelist reads from *The Iron Tracks*. Proshansky Auditorium, CUNY Graduate School, 33 W. 42nd St. (642-2684); free.

Patrick McGrath and Sheila Kohler—3/8 at 7 P.M.: Reading from recent work. KGB, 85 E. 4th St. (358-1935); free.

Elaine Equi and Lewis Warsh—3/9 at 7:30 P.M.: Reading from their poetry. KGB, 85 E. 4th St. (358-1935); free.

Stone & Steel: Paintings and Writings Celebrating the Bridges of New York City—3/3 at 6:15 P.M.: With Kate Rushin, Elizabeth Macklin, Vickie Karp, and Mary Susan Hammond. NYU's Bobst Library, 70 Washington Sq. South (998-2596); free.

Tribute to William Matthews—3/5 at 7 P.M.: Friends and fellow poets including Walter Mosley, Sharon Olds, and Daniel Halpern gather to pay tribute to the author's memory. Tishman Auditorium, the New School, 66 W. 12th St. (254-9628); free.

Ring Lardner Jr.—3/2 at 6:30: Reading from *The Ecstasy of Owen Muir*. The University Club, Council Room, 1 W. 54th St. (767-7800); free.

Mark Doty—3/10 at 6 P.M.: Reading from his work. Room 510, the New School, 66 W. 12th St. (229-5600); $5.

Sophie Cabot Black, Ellen Dudley, Joan Larkin—3/8 at 3 P.M.: Reading from their poetry. Civic Center Synagogue, 49 White St. (966-7141); $7.

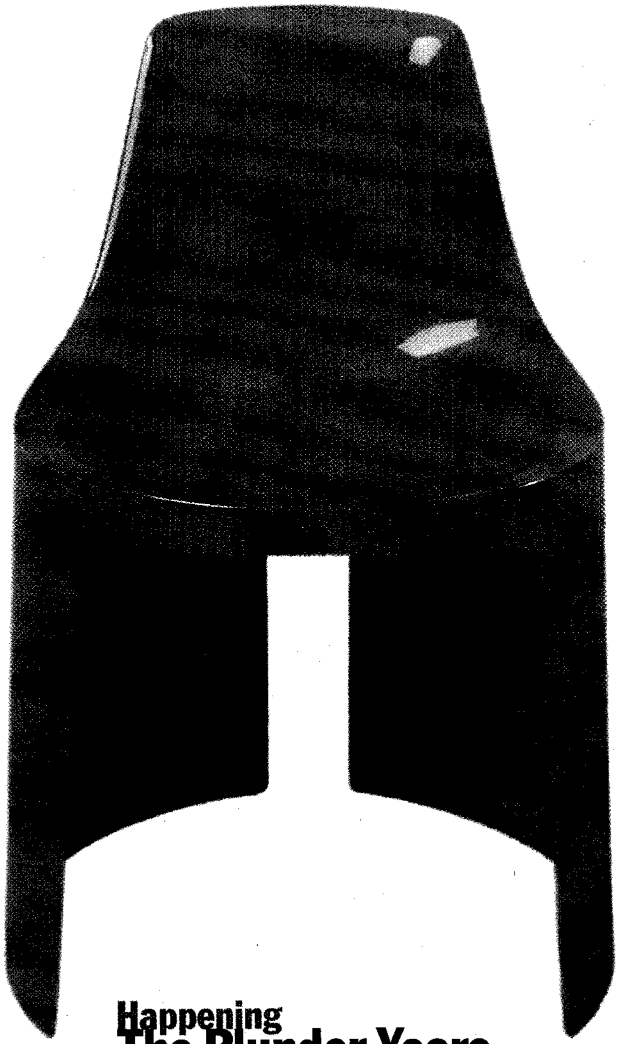
"Passwords: Jean Valentine on Osip Mandelstam"—3/10 at 7 P.M.: With readings in Russian by Alex Cigale. Poets House, 72 Spring St. (431-7920); $7.

Green Guerrillas Winter/Spring Gathering—3/4 at 6: With writers Ken Druse, Margaret Roach, Erika Tamar, Linda Yang, and Abbie Zabar. 126 Crosby St. (674-8124); free

George Plimpton—3/10 at 7:30 P.M.: On Truman Capote. Limbo, 47 Ave. A, between 3rd and 4th Sts. (477-5271); free.

Amiri Baraka and Jayne Cortez—3/6 at 7 P.M.: At Dia Center for the Arts, 548 W. 22nd St. (989-5566); $5.

Allen Sperry and John Coburn—3/7 at 2 P.M.: On *New York's 50 Best Wonderful Little Hotels*. Barnes & Noble, 1972 Broadway, at 66th St. (595-6859); free.



Photograph by Mary O'Toole.

Happening

The Plunder Years

Just as eighties revivalism seems to be fading, nostalgia for the peace-and-love decade is on the rise again. The Sixties Show features trivia and dance contests; vintage collectibles like the plastic Umbo stacking chair (above); and appearances by the TV actors who played Eddie and Marilyn Munster, two of 'My Three Sons,' and Tabitha from 'Bewitched.' March 6 though 8 at the Gramercy Park Armory. (Call 255-0020 for more info.)

Lectures and Panels

Elie Wiesel: The Urgency of Hope—3/5 at 8:15 P.M.: Discusses the need to reconcile the imperatives of the past and future. 92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $30.

Susan Rothenberg—3/5 at 8:15 P.M.: Discusses her paintings with Robert Storr. 92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $18.

Animal Imagery in Dreams—3/4 at 6:30: Jungian scholar and *Dream Animals* author Dr. James Hillman will speak. The Great Hall at Cooper Union, 7th St. at 3rd Ave. (353-4195); $10.

"Secret Gardens in New York"—3/9 at 6: Garden designer Lynden B. Miller gives a photo tour of New York's hidden gardens. Parks Council, Madison Ave. bet. 50th and 51st Sts. (838-9410, ext. 231); $15.

"Asia's Currency Crisis: Global Implications"—3/10 at 8 A.M.: A breakfast panel discussion of how Asia's economic turmoil may affect other emerging markets. Council of the Americas, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. (628-3200); $60.

"Ulster Unionism, British Government Policy, and the Peace Process"—3/5 at 7 P.M.: A lecture with Dr. Margaret O'Callaghan, lecturer at Queen's College, Belfast. NYU's Glucksman Ireland House, 1 Washington Mews (998-3950); $5.

"Poverty is No Virtue, Wealth No Evil: Biblical Perspectives on Money"—3/10 at 8 P.M.: With Dr. David Sperling of Hebrew Union College. The Jewish Theological Seminary, 3080 Broadway, at 122nd St. (678-8950); $15.

Al Sharpton—3/5 at 6 P.M.: Discussing police brutality, O. J. Simpson, Rodney King, Howard

Happening

From *Ragtime* to Riches

E. L. Doctorow is one of New York's great literary heroes: novelist, essayist, editor, co-owner of *The Nation.* And it's his 1975 novel, *Ragtime*—the turn-of-the-century tale of three families' struggle with class, race, and immigration—for which he's most famous. Milos Forman turned it into a film in 1981, and after three years of development and $12 million, the stage musical is now playing at the lavish new Ford Center for the Performing Arts. On March 9, Doctorow appears at the 92nd Street Y as part of "The Making of Ragtime." He will read from the book, then be joined by director Frank Galati and producer Garth Drabinsky, chairman of Livent, to recount *Ragtime's* laborious metamorphosis from award-winning novel to Broadway megamusical. (See listings.) KRIS MCNEIL

Beach, Tawana Brawley, Crown Heights, the media, and everything else. The New School, 66 W. 12th St. (229-5488); $5.

The Honorable Hugh Carey—3/4 at 7:30 P.M.: Discussing the role of God in his life. The Church of St. Vincent Ferrer, 869 Lexington Ave., at 66th St. (744-2080); $5.

E. L. Doctorow—3/9 at 8 P.M.: The author reads from *Ragtime* and discusses its transformation into an acclaimed musical with Stephen Flaherty, Lynn Ahrens, and Frank Galati. 92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $15.

"Forgotten Cities"—3/6 at 2 P.M., 3/7 at 9:30 A.M.: A two-day symposium in which scholars examine ancient cities in the context of contemporary urban theories. First session at Asia Society, 725 Park Ave., at 70th St. Second session at Cantor Film Center of New York University, 36 E. 8th St. (517-ASIA); free.

"Tour de France"—3/4 at 7 P.M.: A lecture and tasting with Judith Fayard. Tinker Auditorium, French Institute, 22 E. 60th St. (355-6100); $15.

Ariel Dorfman and Tomás Eloy Martínez—3/2 at 8 P.M.: The South American writers read their work with translators. At the Unterberg Poetry Center, 92nd St. Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. (996-1100); $12.

Kathy Bates at the Actors Studio—3/9 at 7:30: An in-depth interview about the actor's life and career. The New School, Tishman Auditorium, 66 W. 12th St. (229-5859); $245 for seven sessions with various actors.

Tours

"The World of Finance"—3/6 at 9:30 A.M.: Visitors see trillions of dollars in action from the gallery of the New York Stock Exchange, the skyscraper canyons of the Wall Street district, and the area's fabled financial institutions. Meet at the corner of Wall and Nasau Sts. Call 269-1500 x207 for more information.

"From Naples to Bialystock to Beijing"—3/7 at 1 P.M.: A multiethnic eating tour. Meet at the southeast corner of Essex and Delancey Sts. (439-1090); $12.

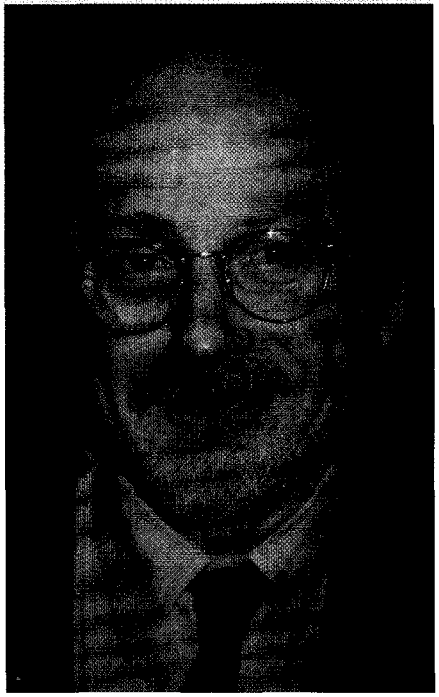
The Jewish Lower East Side—3/8 at 1 P.M.: A Pre-Purim holiday walking tour through 150 years of history. Meet at the southeast corner of Essex and Delancey Sts. (439-1090); $9.

Winter Nature Walk—3/8 at 2 P.M.: Hike with the rangers of Canarsie Park. Meet at the Field House at 88th St. and Seaview Ave., Brooklyn. Call 800-201-PARK for more information.

"The East Village Tales and Taverns"—3/7 at 6 P.M.: A tour of the legends and lore of this ever-changing neighborhood. Meet at the Astor Place subway kiosk (969-8262); $10.

Exhibitions

Paul Strand: A Photographer in His Garden—Through 4/4: A collection of photographs, many of which have never been published, created by the artist during the final years of his life in Ogreval, France. Aperture's Burden Gallery, 20 E. 23rd St. (505-5555, ext. 325); free.



Photograph by Walter Weissman/Globe Photos.

Bridging New York—Through 6/28: Selections from the museum's painting, print, and photographic collections dealing with the city's bridges. The Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 103rd St. (534-1672); $5 suggested contribution.

"Proudly We Served"—Through 9/5: Photographs, artifacts, and models commemorating 200 years of service by African-American veterans. Intrepid Sea Air Space Museum, Pier 86, W. 46th St. (957-7055); $10.

Works on Paper—3/5–3/8: Sanford Smith's acclaimed fair featuring works ranging from old masters to contemporary artists in a wide variety of media. Park Avenue Armory at 67th St. For additional information, call 625-0566; $10.

Navigating the Underground Railroad—Through 3/3: An exploration of the ways slaves interpreted landscape and utilized nature to survive as they traveled to freedom. The Charles A. Dana Discovery Center, Fifth Ave. at 110th St. (860-1370); free.

50 Years of "The Subway Sun"—Through 3/22: An exhibit of the poster series "The Subway Sun," which regularly inspired and admonished passengers on everything from their patriotic duty to proper underground etiquette. New York Transit Museum, Boerum Pl. and Schermerhorn St., Brooklyn Heights (718-243-8601); $3.

Assignment: Rescue—Through 3/29: "The Story of Varian Fry and the Emergency Rescue Committee" commemorates Varian Fry, an American relief worker responsible for rescuing nearly 2,000 Jews and opponents of the Nazis, including Marc Chagall, André Breton, and Hannah Arendt, from Vichy France during World War II. Though Fry's efforts are not as well known as those of Raoul

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Solutions to last week's puzzles

W	I	N	D	P	I	P	E	■	M	A	N	C	U	B
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Gardner *continued from page 26*

"But I didn't do another party that month," Diane says.

"The host and hostess are requesting all the children," the master of ceremonies announces over the sound system back at the Garden City Hotel. The kids dutifully return to the ballroom, where the screening of the video tribute is about to begin.

Charles Koppelman has already left.

"They don't stay," confides a student of the bar mitzvah scene, referring to Koppelman's observed bar mitzvah–going habits.

Some guests are more engaged. In May, Revlon president Ronald O. Perelman sat in on drums with Kool and the Gang at a Pierre Hotel bas mitzvah for the daughter of his vice-chairman Donald Drapkin.

("He's fabulous," reports an eyewitness, who's not even an employee of MacAndrews & Forbes, Perelman's holding company. The band, however, apparently wasn't thrilled to share their gig with him. "They didn't really want it to happen," says a member of the entertainment team. "When they introduced him, they didn't call him Ron Perelman. They called him Ron Friedman.")

As video tributes go, the one for the brother and sister is relatively prosaic. (At the Drapkin gala, cover girl Claudia Schiffer blew kisses to the bas mitzvah girl. And for one young man's homage, Andy Marcus, the Jewish Establishment's photographer and videographer, ventured into the New York Knicks locker room, where the players offered the bar mitzvah boy congratulations. This isn't something the Knicks do for all their fans—the kid's dad had an in with the team.) The soundtrack on this tribute features Louis Armstrong singing "What a Wonderful World" while pictures of the sibs and their appealing mom and dad—skiing out West, strolling on their private beach, sharing a moment with President Clinton—flash across the screen. The room is so full of heavy hitters that the commander-in-chief's cameo raises hardly a murmur.

After the video ends, the kids rush back to the game room, the grown-ups finally settle down to dine and dance, and Harriette and Diane retire to another ballroom, one that's being used as a staging area, for a well-deserved bite to eat.

But Harriette isn't content to rest on her laurels.

"We should have done an egg-cream setup," she says.

Diane consoles her: "We'll do it in Florida." ■

Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler, his accomplishments are no less riveting. The exhibit is composed largely of historic photographs, artifacts, and related works of art. The Jewish Museum, 1109 Fifth Ave., at 92nd St. (423-3200); $7.

New York From Above: An Aerial View—Through 6/14: An exhibit of 26 paintings by contemporary painter and geographer Spelman Evans Downer that chart the evolution of Greater Gotham over the past 100 years. His work depicts historical landscapes before extensive urbanization as well as space-age satellite views of Manhattan. The Museum of the City of New York, 1220 Fifth Ave., at 103rd St. (534-1672); $5 suggested contribution.

Benefits

NU Breed Celebrity Auction—3/3 at 6 P.M.: A cocktail reception followed by a live auction featuring donations from Donna Karan, Princess Diana, Gucci, the Beatles, and others. Christie's East, 219 E. 67th St. (327-338); $45 in advance, $55 at the door.

Events

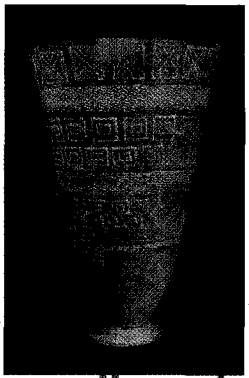
The Sixties Show—3/6–3/8 starting at 11 A.M.: The largest retro show to hit New York City, featuring the fashion, music, furniture, and collectibles of the sixties. With more than a hundred booths, concerts, and puppets. Gramercy Park Armory, Lexington Ave. at 26th St. Call 343-3626 for additional information; $10.

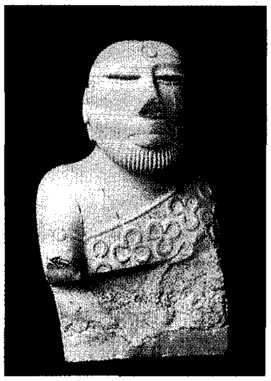
Sports

Feud for the Fire—The Knicks-Nets matchup this Tuesday night promises to be more than just another tabloid-inflated edition of a nonexistent rivalry. For all intents and playoff purposes, the Knicks and Nets are on an even par and neither team looks like it will be able to distance itself from the other in the standings, let alone catch up to first-place Miami. You might argue that the Nets have the psychological advantage, since they are the team on the rise while the Knicks are slowly slipping into an era of sub-.500 reconstruction. But the parity resulting from these two fortunes passing in the night should fuel the kind of elbow-jabbin', loose-ball sprawlin', in-your-face jawin' that makes one hunger for a multi-game playoff battle. *See "Game Week" for team schedules.*

Big East Championship—3/4–8: St. John's continues the push toward its first NCAA Tournament bid since 1993 in the Garden's hoppin'est college party of the year. Call 465-MSG1 for ticket and schedule information.

Bagels & Boxing—3/8 at 10:30 A.M.: Believe it or not, the title of this breakfast fund-raiser is not the joke it seems. Once upon a time, boxing was as synonymous with Jewish culture as that doughy breakfast treat. Alan Bodner, author of *When Boxing Was a Jewish Sport;* Budd Schulberg, author of *The Harder They Fall;* and Marty Glickman, famous Knicks broadcaster, will discuss the part boxing played in American Jewish culture. Proceeds go to help send the 92nd Street Y's delegation to the Maccabi Youth Games this summer, the largest gathering of Jewish youth in the world. The 92nd Street Y, $20. Call 415-5700 for information.





Happening Off the Map

Remember Tiahuanaco? How about Shang? If not, maybe it's time to refresh your memory by attending "Forgotten Cities," a two-day symposium on the world's bygone metropolises. Scholars from all over the country will gather to discuss the relationship between ancient civilizations and modern urban theory. At the Asia Society on March 6 and NYU on March 7. (See listings.)

Online

New York Magazine on the Web—Follow the daily Website picks from "Stephanie's Surf Report" (in the "Today" section of www.newyorkmag.com) to surf the Web with a little direction. This week: Find out what happened on this day 100 years ago at the History Channel; celebrate Motown's 40th birthday; read cyber comics at a Marvel-ous site; give your opinion to Pulsefinder and possibly win prizes; and get ahead on your taxes by filing online. And while you're in the neighborhood at www.nymag.com, stick around and see what else we've got. In addition to selected articles from the current issue and a searchable "Cue" section, find daily picks of New York events in "Vanessa Takes Manhattan," browse through the first paragraphs of new books in "First Words," and wander the streets of Brooklyn in "50 Ways to Love Park Slope."

GAME WEEK

HOME ▨ AWAY ▨

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SUN
RANGERS	BUF MSG 7:30PM		FLA MSG 7:30PM			NJ FOX 3PM	
ISLANDERS		PHI SC 7:30PM			BUF SC2 7:30PM	COL SC 7:30PM	
DEVILS	PHI SC 7:30PM			BOS SC 7:30PM		NYR FOX 3PM	
KNICKS		NJ MSG 7:30PM		WAS MSG 7PM	PHI MSG 7:30PM		CHI NBC 5:30PM
NETS		NY SC 7:30PM			UTA SC 7:30PM		CHA SC 12:30PM
	3/2	3/3	3/4	3/5	3/6	3/7	3/8

Photographs by Jonathan Mark Kenoyer.

kids

Inflated...Operatic...Marooned

Ground Rules:

● = free

● = now or never (one-shot deal or final week)

Children's Events

Musical Journey—*From Jigs to Jazz* opens with ten drummers walking down the aisles pounding on African drums. The survey of American music has the audience clapping out Jamaican polyrhythms and listening to how "Amazing Grace" sounds as a hymn, then a gospel song. Part of the Just Kidding series—a collaboration between **SYMPHONY SPACE** and **THE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF MANHATTAN.** Concertgoers are welcome to walk a few blocks south afterward to attend workshops at the museum that take up themes raised in the concert. 3/7 at 11. With a concert ticket stub, admission to CMOM is reduced to $3—a $2 saving. Symphony Space is located at 2537 Broadway, at 95th St. (864-5400). The Children's Museum of Manhattan is located at 212 W. 83rd St. (721-1234).●

Afternoon at the Opera—**THE METROPOLITAN OPERA GUILD** presents an English-language performance of Donizetti's comic opera *Don Pasquale*—with full orchestra and elaborate sets and costumes—for family audiences. (No child under 6 will be admitted.) Audience members can meet performers at cast parties after both shows. 3/7 and 3/8 at 2. John Jay Theatre, 899 Tenth Ave., at 59th St. (769-7008). Tickets are $25; the cast party is $5 for family groups of four.●

High Five—Cultural events of every stripe become wonderfully affordable to junior- and senior-high-school students through the end of May. Under the auspices of High 5, nearly 6,000 tickets to events at New York's leading cultural institutions cost $5 weekends; $5 buys two tickets on weeknights. Pick up High 5 catalogues free at Ticketmaster outlets, public libraries, select Barnes and Noble bookstores, or the High 5 executive offices (1 E. 53rd St.); access it at www.high5tix.com or call HI5-TKTS to have one sent. Participating cultural institutions include Carnegie Hall, the Apollo Theater, and the Museum of Modern Art. (Students—from schools anywhere—need to present valid identification.)●

Funny Business—Alice Eve Cohen presents *The Parrot,* based on a quirky Italian folktale, at **CAROLINES KIDS KLUB** (the official moniker for Carolines Comedy Club in its family-friendly mode), 3/7 and 3/8 at 2. (Lunch is available—with comic flourishes—upstairs at Comedy Nation Restaurant), 1626 Broadway, bet. 49th and 50th Sts. (757-4100). Tickets are $10; reservations required. ●

Air Time—Once the man inside *Sesame Street*'s Barkley the Dog, he's now one half of the Fred Garbo Inflatable Theater Co. With Brazilian ballerina Daielma Santos, Fred Garbo has toured the world with colorful, frequently absurd pieces that tap the comic-theatrical potential of inflated shapes, gymnastics, dance, juggling, and magic-making. 3/7–3/15. **NEW VICTORY THEATER,** 209 W. 42nd St. (239-6200); $10–$25.

Swiss Family Robinson—**THEATREWORKS/USA** presents a musical version of the tale of shipwreck and pulling together to make a life on a desert isle. Hourlong performances are for children ages 7 and up. 3/7, 3/8, 3/14, and 3/15 at 12:30. The Promenade Theatre, 2162 Broadway, at 76th St. (627-7373). Individual tickets are $18.50; a flexible ten-ticket subscription is $145.

Theater of the Absurd—A puppet show that incorporates shadows, magic, and live music, **WE MUST BE IDIOTS'** production of *The King Stag* is a comic-romantic fairy tale with an edgy modern sensibility and wit. 3/5–3/21. Access Theater Space, 380 Broadway, fourth floor (946-2142). Tickets are $12, $10 students and seniors.

Why?—Those kids who come up with the most "intriguing" weather-related questions could be eligible for prizes in the Itching to Know Science Contest. Ten regional winners will win software, science-museum memberships, and other cool stuff. For contest details write to: **LANACANE ITCH INFORMATION CENTER** (Contest Materials), P.O. Box 328-LC, White Plains, N.Y., 10602-0328; e-mail Itchrelief@aol.com or check out www.lanacane.com. Deadline for entries is 4/1.●

Strung Heroes (and Heroines)—If you were an opera singer with an artistic bent, you too might stage fairy tales for your children in a charming little puppet theater. As it is, you'll have to take kids to see Susan Delery Whedon's **PAPAGENO PUPPET THEATER** instead. Currently, *Cinderella* is performed (weekends at noon) to the Prokofiev score, and *Puff the Magic Dragon* (weekends at 1:30) to the song made famous by Peter, Paul, and Mary. 462 Columbus Ave., bet. 82nd and 83rd Sts., through 4/5; $5. Reservations required.

In the Bag—For 40 years now, **THE PAPER BAG PLAYERS** have brought childlike qualities—most notably their trademark boxes-into-spaceships inventiveness—to joyous, freewheeling productions for children. Weekends at 2 through March 8. Sylvia and Danny Kaye Playhouse, 68th St. bet. Park and Lexington Aves. (772-4448). Tickets are $15 and $20.●

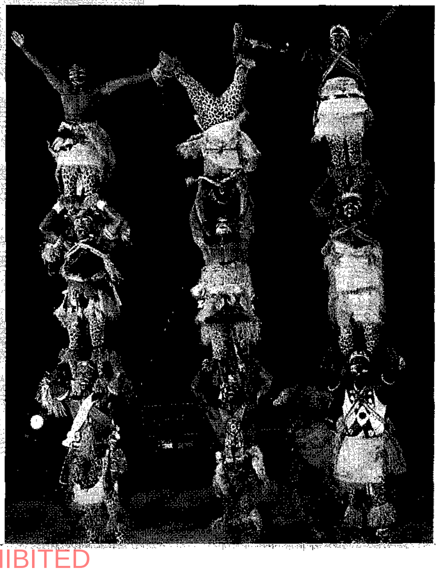
Animal Free Circus—Fifteen acrobats, clowns, and aerial artists are **CIRQUE ELOISE,** a group of Quebec-based circus performers who have toured the world. Their work, though smaller and more intimate, is frequently compared to that other circus from north of the border, Cirque du Soleil. 3/7 at 2 and 8. New Jersey Performing Arts Center, 1 Center St., downtown Newark (1-888-466-5722); $10–$29. ●

The Zucchini Brothers—Even though they're named after a vegetable (and probably kind of good for you), recording artists Jack, Steve, and Sam are surprisingly popular with kids. 3/7 at 1:30. **WEST END CHILDREN'S THEATRE,** 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (food is available before or after); $8.50. Reserve by calling 877-6115.●

Performance
High-Wire Act

As Jim Ragona, ringmaster of the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, was flying to the city of Bishkek in the outer reaches of the former Soviet Union, he noticed that one of the engines on his plane wasn't working. Trying to reassure him, the Kyrgyzstan Airlines flight attendant explained that the aircraft had been flying without that engine for years. "So I just gripped the seat all the way there," he recalls with a nervous laugh. During a two-year hiatus from his regular duties as ringmaster and performance director, Ragona says, he traveled more than a million miles searching out new talent. Persuading authorities in Gabon to allow 22 members of the Circus of the Equator to come to the U.S. required "remunerating" numerous officials in the tiny dictatorship—well worth it, he says, because the acrobats, who perform with feline grace to the rhythm of their own drums, are "unlike anything anyone has ever seen." The West Africans join performers from fifteen other countries in the current show, but Ragona, originally from Connecticut, is inclined to minimize the challenges of working and living with people from so many cultures. "We speak seven or eight languages—but we're all circus people," he insists. The seventeen-year Ringling Bros. veteran does relate one recent incident, though, that was definitely an eye-opener: Walking through the circus train, he came across a group of Cossacks—a horseback act he signed after that memorable, underpowered airplane ride. "They were slaughtering a lamb," Ragona remembers, still incredulous. "Apparently, that's what you do when it's your birthday in Kyrgyzstan." (Continental Airlines Arena, March 10 to 15; Nassau Coliseum, March 17 to 23; Madison Square Garden, March 27 to April 13. $10.50 to $42.50.)

BARBARA ENSOR



Photograph courtesy of Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus.

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Former Fashion Model—Caribbean-born, world-traveled, bright, warm, sensual and self-sufficient - seeks tall, cultured man of substance, 49-65, to share the pleasures of life and a romantic, committed relationship. Serious responses only. 2108 ✉ ☎

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Searching For Ally McBeal—Quite handsome, really cute (33, white male, 5'11", 175, brown hair/eyes and fit... Got it out of the way!), commitment-minded, funny and very successful bad-boy-turned-good, in search of one very special woman. Your obvious question: "If what you say is true, why are you placing a personal?" I'm glad you asked. "An exhausting work schedule that limits social access, a fairly recent geographic relocation, and the fact that I'm old and honest enough to realize I'm a bit lonely," is the answer. I am looking to find a very attractive/fit (actress-type), nonreligious, kindhearted woman with a creative, downtown edge, to make extremely happy. Photo/note a must. 2183 ✉ ☎

Looking For A (212)—Single white female in search of single white male. Me: tall and slim, attractive and fit, funny and smart, relationship-/family-minded nonsmoker. You: 32-40, with similar qualities. I'm ready - are you? Note/photo/phone. 2106 ✉ ☎

Adventuresome—But down-to-earth, very handsome, youthful, fit, successful, healthy 55-year-old business exec would like to meet a very attractive, tall, slim brunette (Asian/Latin), 35-45, who enjoys dancing, candlelight and champagne. Photo. 2096 ✉

Sensitive, Caring, Attractive—White female (35), looking for a special guy to have fun and enjoy life with. At age 31, I suffered a stroke which left me slightly paralyzed on one side, but I am a fully functional, independent working woman who appreciates life more than ever and wants to share it with a special friend. 2145 ✉

Jet-Set Male—Desires long-term relationship. Are you an intelligent and beautiful woman used to being treated with respect and generosity, or desirous of such? If so, a fairy-tale life of travel and luxury may be available. Please send all of the following: note, photo, age, height, weight and phone to: 2190 ✉

Well-Crafted Man, 5'7"—Healthy soul, dancer's physique, interesting career in academia. Seeks clever communicator with great taste, tiny waist, probably early 40s (but...who knows?). Prefer humorous note to serious bio (ughh!). Recent photo appreciated. 2118 ✉

Angel Sought—18-25, by the Flying Dutchman, who has disconsolately wandered for ages looking to be redeemed by the woman true and fair who believes that her spiritual and physical beauty can only be preserved by adherence to Plato's Laws, book 8, verses 838-840, and the Old Testament. 2138 ✉

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Tall, Handsome, Charming—Gentleman, 45, intuitive, witty, perceptive, pinstriped, fit and Jewish, who loves ballet and jazz - seeks relationship with beautiful, bright, upscale, personable, vibrant, available, athletic, very fit, leggy woman, 35-45. Photo. 2163 ✉ ☎

Pretty, Petite Professional Female—Fun, romance, many interests to share with like male, 48-63 (not petite). Photo/phone/note, please. 2149 ✉

Lovely-Looking, Physically Fit—Warm, caring Manhattan woman, attorney, widowed with grown children, seeks accomplished, 55-65 man with sense of fun and adventure, who has arrived at a good place in life and wants to make the most of it. Note/photo. 2187 ✉

Good-Looking, Sensitive, Funny—Single Jewish male, 39, seeking female partner, 27-38, pretty, petite...and also loves cats (I have two), enjoys rock music, dining out, Atlantic City and quiet evenings at home. Photo/letter. 2146 ✉ ☎

Nice Guy—Upper East Side, Ivy educated divorced male, financially secure. Lived in Europe and likes things European. Seeks attractive (quite important), interesting female under 49, who's considerate and has great sense of humor. Photo. 2148 ✉ ☎

Lonely/Wandering—Fun, fit, single white male, 29, seeks lady, 28-38. Lasting relationship. Race open. 2140 ✉ ☎

NJ, Attractive, Independent Widow—Fort Lee area, looking for educated, kind 60-plus man, caring relationship. 2152 ✉

Successful Businessman/Pianist—Tall, slim, single, attractive, decent, white, Christian, young 64 - seeks professional lady of substance and sincerity to enhance quality of life. 2154 ✉

Body Of A Centerfold—Mind of a scholar, heart of an angel... Beautiful, Jewish, Ivy-educated, unpretentious goddess (!) of gym and ski slope, holding out for truly special man (30-45). Please be smart, attractive, charismatic, successful and fun. Photo. 2156 ✉ ☎

The Older The Fiddle—The sweeter the music. 51, fit, feisty and full of fun, pretty and bright. Are you the one? 48-plus male - kind, smart, attractive, financially secure, serious about relationship with a sense of humor and style... Photo please. 2121 ✉ ☎

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Gay White Female—38, very attractive, successful professional - loves the country, romantic walks on the beach and exploring the city. Looking to share love and laughter with a special person. 2170 ✉☎

Lovely MD—Tall, elegant, warm, compassionate, cultured, 44, Jewish, divorced, seeks loving, bright, active male to share the arts and good times. 2160 ✉

Smart, Successful And Athletic—31, seeks confident, fun, good-looking female, 24-32. Letter/picture. 2102 ✉ ☎

Attractive, Jet-Set Single White Man—38, ski in Aspen, summer in Hamptons/ Europe... Seeks attractive female - sweet, caring. Photo, please. 2189 ✉

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Very Nice, Handsome Firefighter—Heart of gold, 6', 40, single, white Catholic male, 190 lbs, athletic, loves the outdoors. Seeks very attractive, intelligent, classy lady to share what life has to offer. Please send note/photo. Thanks. 2117 ✉

Like A Fine Wine—I am full-bodied, robust and rich in flavor. If you long for that one and only tender, sexy and creative woman with NY smarts, a cool career in media and a killer sense of humor, this beautiful 32-year-old Rubenesque redhead wants to meet you! 2094 ✉

Feisty Redhead—32, single Jewish female, attractive, intelligent, athletic, seeks single Jewish male, 32-40, to share common interests including skiing, working out, golf, dinner and theater, for long-term relationship. 2158 ✉ ☎

Single White Female—*24, blond,* 5'7", 120 lbs, teacher, seeks professional, single white male, 20s-30s, handsome and intelligent, for friendship leading to long-term relationship. 2185 ✉ ☎

Attractive, Self-Motivated, Romantic—White female, seeking attractive, intelligent, outgoing male, 26-32, for a meaningful, long-lasting relationship. From tri-state area. 2115 ✉

Ayn Rand Enthusiast—Upscale male, good-looking, successful, high achiever, culturally literate. Seeks classy, career-directed female equal, late 30s (or nearby), 5'5" or under, with brains and beauty. You hold rational, secular, individualist values. 2141 ✉

Handsome, Kind, Sexy, Playful—PhD, author of three books, amateur musician, China lover, gentle jogger, mostly vegetarian, excellent health, 61 years young, juicy and bouncy. Seeks kind, easygoing woman, preferably 40s, trim, musical, and lots of fun, for dear friend/ life partner. Note/recent photo. 2125 ✉

One-Hundred-Ten-Percent Woman!—Let's "spring" into the centennial! Leap into a life rich with kindness, culture, passion. Love concerts, opera, art, photography, world travel. 5'7" beauty - seeks well-educated Jewish man, 55-62. 2150✉☎

Pretty Woman—Looking for knight in shining armor to rescue me. Loving, sexy, preppy, Waspy blond, blue eyes, 33, with great career - now aspiring to be homemaker for sweet, sexy, successful, decent guy with great smile. Send photo in shiny armor. 2159 ✉

Handsome, Successful PhD—Clinical psychologist in 40s. Interests include the arts, working out, film. Looking for right woman for friendship, romance and hopefully future. Photo/phone. 2188✉☎

Warm, Well-Rounded, Successful—Attractive male, 40, with brains, wit and flair - likes travel, music and exercise. Seeks attractive, fit, affectionate, smart female with vitality and spirit, for long-term relationship. 2114 ✉

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Sense And Sensibility—Life requires both. Single professional woman, 34, attractive, intelligent, varied interests, seeks man with humor, intelligence and sensuality to share life's experiences. Manhattan resident only. Prefer divorced *or widowed with professional or advanced* degree. 2131 ✉ ☎

Very Handsome Scandinavian Looks—43, male Protestant professional, traditional values, seeks compassionate, honest, affectionate, upbeat female under 38, for happily ever after. Photo/phone. 2147 ✉

British Male, 28—Seeks attractive, fit, easygoing woman to show him the real New York. Note/photo. 2178 ✉

Pretty Artist In NJ—Educated and fun, seeks cultured man, 55 plus. 2099 ✉ ☎

Lovely Catholic Blond—40, seeks a secure, gracious man. 2103 ✉ ☎

Pretty, 28-Year-Old Jewish Teacher—Funny, intelligent, fit, vegetarian. Loves biking, cooking, working out and movies. Seeks secure male with good sense of humor. Note/photo/phone please. 2168 ✉ ☎

More Than Nice Jewish Woman—Seeks red-blooded Jewish gentleman for romance in any climes. I'm not an Alaskan restaurateur but an NYC provocateur, seeking one who is intelligent, cultured, worldly, attractive and fun, 50-65. I am fair of face, ultra-slim, 5'5", sophisticated and have many passions. Note/photo/phone. 2134 ✉

Handsome, Sincere, 6' Gentleman—Dentist, 41. Seeks pretty, warm, intelligent lady. Photo/bio. 2104 ✉

European-Born, Attractive Blond—Blue-eyed, sophisticated and affectionate lady, 49, 5'5", NJ resident. Enjoys reading, traveling, theater and music, movies. Would like to meet a professional man, 44-55, compassionate, intelligent, caring, easygoing but monogamous at heart, with similar interests. Photo/phone. 2194 ✉

Very Pretty Professional—With a successful career (cool chemist), single mom, 37, Jewish (nonreligious), adventurous, good sense of humor, top shape, romantic, casual class, is looking forward to meeting tall, charming, handsome man who's intelligent, well-spoken, funny, embraces challenges and is passionate. 2109 ✉

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I'll Never Let You Forget You're A Man—'Cause I'm a beautiful, single Jewish female, petite, passionate, outgoing, wise, green-eyed blond, with much love to give the right tall, bright, adventurous, fun, fit, artistic, marriage-minded hopeless romantic, 30-45. Nonsmoker. Note/phone/photo. 2127 ☒ ☎

Lady With A Yacht—Desires first mate to set sail on the high seas of life. No Titanics wanted. Must be cool, compassionate, kind, considerate and adventuresome, 30-55. 2139 ☒

Wanted, Dead Or Alive—(Alive preferred): very good-looking, single, white Jewish male, at least 5'9", successful, with a good sense of humor, 26-32. No beards or mustaches. Reward if found: me - very pretty, intelligent Jewish female, 26, who has a great sense of humor and loves to laugh, dine out, go to movies and play board games. Photo a must. 2144 ☒

Warm And Kind Guy—34, seeks woman, 24-30, for friendship and possible relationship. I tend to be a little shy and cautious, so it might be a good thing if you have a little patience (at least in the beginning). I'm financially secure, but am a casual and laid-back kind of person. Not a Wall Street-type. I'm slim, and decent-looking. Note/photo. 2175 ☒

Radiant Writer—Pretty, slim, savvy woman of substance loves Bach, Broadway and far-flung places. Seeks smart, spirited, adorable man, 47-60. 2128 ☒

Are You On The Menu?—5'4" blond woman, 30, green eyes, Christian, whose tastes include travel, wine, cooking, the outdoors, time with friends. Looking to order a rare guy: bright, self-confident professional, 30-39, with a love of life. Are we a recipe for success? 2113 ☒☎

Young, Handsome European Doctor—Seeks young, beautiful, educated, sexy Asian lady for serious relationship. Photo a must. POB 566, NY, NY 10009

World-Class Act—Foreign-born, accented leading man, tall, dark, handsome, suave and urbane, invites response from multi-faceted beauty, professional by day, purring by night. Multicultural, spirited idealist, into foreign travel, ethnic dining, nonstop romance. Latest pix. Personal note. 39 plus. 2167 ☒

European Professional Woman—Blond, blue eyes, 5'5", fit, seeks man, mid 30s, similar background. Photo. 2135 ☒

Caught You Looking!—I'm an old-fashioned romantic who loves the city as much as the country. I'm 35, 5'11", blue eyes, Jewish, warm and a handsome professional, seeking a warm, sincere, affectionate, unpretentious, pretty woman, 28-34. Please send note and photo. 2186☒

Banker Babe—Pin-stripes by day, Victoria's Secret by night. Slim, curvy, athletic, divorced Jewish female seeks secure, nice guy, not necessarily Jewish, 38-50, for fun and future. 2142 ☒ ☎

Fit Man, 68, With Vim—Seeks female soul mate. Jewish, divorced, 5'8", (212) executive, young look, warm, fun....to share life joys with secure, fit lady. 2116 ☒☎

Nice-Looking, Down-To-Earth—Male journalist, 45, seeks pretty, 30-something woman to explore Manhattan, movies, dining, trips (upstate, NJ, CT, Boston). Worst scenario: we'll meet for brunch and part as friends. Best scenario: our date will last forever. Photo optional. 2165 ☒ ☎

Successful Music Composer/Pianist—40, resembles Daniel Day-Lewis, well-traveled, very moral but nonreligious - loves skiing, bicycling in park and the Philharmonic. Looking for a nonsmoking woman of substance, 24-34, to inspire next symphony. Photo and note appreciated. 2173 ☒

For Rent With Option To Buy—Sincere, fun-loving male, 36, 5'7", into skiing, beach, NYC, Seinfeld...seeks "nice" female. Available immediately! 2107 ☒☎

Let's Buy Our Dream House On LI—(Nassau). I'm 32, divorced white male (with 8-year-old and 6-year-old boys who live with their mom), 5'11", 230 lbs, all muscle, handsome, financially successful, and seek an attractive, 25-34-year-old female who is looking for a full-time companion, is affectionate, enjoys life and looks good doing it. Enclose photo with note if interested. 2120 ☒

Attractive, Intelligent, Warmhearted—European woman, 55, professional pianist with many other interests, seeks bright, caring man for friendship and more. 2151☒

A Warm CT Fireplace Awaits—Handsome, prosperous professional, 40, seeks lady of intrigue who possesses beauty, charm and class supreme. Your passport to fantasy is a mere letter or phone call away. Note/photo. 2166 ☒ ☎

Born-Again Christian Widow—Slim and attractive, would love to meet a Christian gentleman, 57-65. 2162 ☒

Did Titanic Make You Cry?—This handsome, active Asian male's shoulder is waiting for you. If you are a late 20s-30s female, independent yet vulnerable, stylish yet sensible, fit but also a chocoholic, take a leap of faith... I will catch you! Photo, please. 2122 ☒

Gay Wall Street Guy—34, masculine, handsome, well-educated, 5'10", 160, dark hair/eyes. Well-rounded: film, travel, outdoors, Economist, bookstores, culture, gym, hockey, cars. Seeks intelligent, clean-cut, mature, nice guy, 30-42. 2196 ☒ ☎

Let's Talk—Very good-looking, successful (MBA) yet grounded, single white male, 34, with a great sense of humor, seeks a slim, attractive bi woman for a long-term relationship. If you have a good sense of humor and know what you want out of life, take a chance. The worst that can happen is a nice conversation. Note/photo. 2157 ☒

Good-Looking Christian Man—39, professional, fit, with sense of humor, seeks attractive woman, 29-38, for loving, caring relationship. No smokers. 2177 ☒☎

Intelligent, Good-Looking, Fun-Loving—Funny, Ivy-educated, Jewish male attorney, 32, 5'10", competitive athlete, communicative and with the ability to share, seeks friendship, silliness and romance. Favorites include biking, enjoying fine food and wine, seeing movies, holding hands, skiing, hiking, dancing and learning new things. Seeks adventurous, intelligent, affectionate, slim, good-looking, athletic Jewish woman (24-33). Note and recent photo. 2119 ☒

Funny And Fun-Loving—Blond professional woman - intelligent, 40ish, full-figured, with a warm smile and a passionate nature, is seeking a happy, intelligent, successful and adventurous man, 38-55, with a sense of purpose and a zest for life. 2169 ☒ ☎

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Go For The Gold!—Very beautiful, sensuous woman, gorgeous legs, petite, size 4, with a warm, loyal heart, great sense of humor, varied interests, seeks a marriage-minded gentleman, 49-65, who is caring, successful, who wants to share a loving life with a dynamic partner. 2172 ☒

Spirited Beauty—35, Jewish, self-employed... Apple pie to pad Thai, Joni Mitchell to Tom Petty to Meredith Monk, Seinfeld to Sister Wendy, Yoga Zone to 10Ks (slowly!), Park Slope to cyberspace, flip-flops to little black dress... Seeks vibrant Jewish man, 35-40, for soulful friendship, laughter and romance. Letter/photo, please. 2112 ☒

Romantic Lawyer—Tall, good-looking, caring and affectionate, with multiple interests, seeks attractive, warm, interesting woman, 48-56, for sharing and commitment. Prefer (914), (212). Note/photo optional. 2192 ☒

Passionate Physician—6'2", 175 lbs, handsome, 30, nonsmoking Catholic male who enjoys the arts and long walks on the beach, seeking down-to-earth, 22-33-year-old female who cares about people and laughs out loud at a joke - for long-term relationship. Note/photo. 2161 ☒

A Little Romance, Perhaps—5'10", slim and easy-to-look-at lady trial lawyer with downtown sensibilities, seeking an intellectually fearless, physical and big-hearted guy. Must be 40-50, have engrossing job, good friends...and kiss, laugh and commiserate well. 2179 ☒

Handsome, Caring, Secure—Seeks trim, bright lady, 50s, travel. Photo/note. 2111☒

Fair, Slim, Pretty Blond—Stylish, 5'6 1/2", size 8, a toned, gym-fit 50, Protestant background, refined, no kids, no baggage, nonsmoker, cultured, non-aggressive, stable and sane, upbeat, Manhattanite, financially okay, educator, recently retired (early) - likes travel, languages, NY Times, widowers. Be quite successful, wholesome white male, 50-63, free, like me, to enjoy the best together. Bio/pix. 2129 ☒

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White, Educated (47) Male—Seeks lady soul mate for life partner. Letter. 2180 ✉

Romantic Man—Extremely affectionate, loving and funny, 45, 6', 175, sexy, athletic body, cute face, bald head, caring heart, marriage-minded; love beach, boats, sports, music, dancing. Photo. 2171 ✉

I Need You—Family-minded, successful man. I'm an attractive, professional, intelligent Jewish-Russian female, 46, 5'5", with varied interests. Photo. 2098 ✉

Shall We Dance?—This slim, attractive, vibrant designer's new passion for ballroom dancing would be greatly enhanced with an enthusiastic, fun-loving gentleman, 55-65, NY/NJ, eager to practice his steps! Phone. 2182 ✉ ☎

Handsome, Sensitive, Educated—Professional, 45, 6', seeks attractive, slim and emotionally secure female, Christian counterpart, 35-40, to explore meaningful relationship. Photo/note/phone. 2126 ✉

Female, 53, Lighthearted—Young professional, 5'2", friendmaker - loves children and dogs, tennis and music, educator. My children have graduated college and are independent, the dog died, and now I'm looking for a gentleman to be my best friend - with humility, humor and brains, who treads lightly over rough waters, who sees the fun and absurdity in life, who holds on to traditional values and who is financially independent and modest. Note/phone. 2155 ✉

Beautiful Italian-American Woman—Photographer, 54, seeks a man with kindness, courage and passion, who can dine with a diplomat or eat on a dirt floor in India. He has a sense of humor and an artist's love of life. Please send snapshot and note. 2143 ✉ ☎

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Manhattan Lady—Hetero, seeking other women, 55-65, to enjoy Manhattan. 2132 ✉

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Beauty And Brains—A great package. You are 55-65, single Jewish male, tightly wrapped and able to deliver excitement, intelligence and charm. 2136 ✉

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He gazed at me with the wet insistence of a man who has been told he has beautiful eyes.

He rehearsed and then reaffixed his eyes, in the lizardly manner of William F. Buckley Jr.

He stared at me.

Above, trial and error and error. Two early versions of one short (under 25 words) sentence from a work in progress, please.

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Elaine Stallworth, New Port Richey, Fla.
sp. ment.: Marie Morris, Boston, Mass.

GIULIANI—24 HOURS LIVE!
Louis Phillips, N.Y.C.

REGIS2
Douglas Hopkins, Doylestown, Pa.

THE NET WORTH NETWORK
Paul Kondis, Alexandria, Va.

CASPER CITRON RECALLS
Eddie Reardon, Mount Kisco, N.Y.

STTV—All Star Trek All the Time.
Deborah Freedman, Pittsburgh, Pa.

THE GREEN WITCH TALKS LOW-LIGHT PLANTS
Coeli Carr, N.Y.C.

NEW YORK'S MOST WANTED PEDESTRIANS
Jeff Tenzer, N.Y.C.

KRISHNAN SCIENCE NEWS
Elisa Falciglia, Reston, Va.

RECYCLING WITH TED AND JANE
Karen Lesser, Lenexa, Kan.;
Patsy V. Felmet, Wintersville, Ohio

LIFESTYLES FOR THE APPROACHING ARMAGEDDON
Bob Kopac, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

CHCHCH—The Championship Cheerleading Channel.
C. Olds, Freeport, Me.

THE HOME NURSING CHANNEL
Fern Kupfer, Ames, Iowa

THE INDEPENDENT PROSECUTOR CHANNEL
Sonja Rand, N.Y.C.
sp. ment.: Bob Dean, Raleigh, N.C.;
Patricia O. Simmons, Ann Arbor, Mich.

IVANKA TRUMP'S "WAYS AND MEANS FOR HAPPY TEENS"
A. L. Colby, Metuchen, N.J.

ALL ANDY HARDY ALL THE TIME
Chuck Smith, Woodbridge, Va.

THE HOUR OF POWER TOOLS
John Felmet, Wintersville, Ohio

TRUMP TABERNACLE
Raymond E. Benenson, Niskayuna, N.Y.

PAWN SHOPPING CHANNEL
Roy C. Dicks, Raleigh, N.C.
similarly: David I. Warren, Chagrin Falls, Ohio

THE ALL-WAYANS CHANNEL
Josephine C. Lume, Maspeth, N.Y.

THIRD GRADE NOW
Marilyn Crystal, Scarsdale, N.Y.

THE LOST ART OF MOONING
Sharon Love Cook, Beverly Farms, Mass.

VINDELOODEON—The Indian Food Network.
Shan Abeywardena, Staten Island

LEFTIES!
Kevin Cuddihy, Fairfax, Va.

CELEBRITY CANING FROM SINGAPORE
Walter Grabow, Brooklyn
similarly: John Foshee, Austin, Tex.

CHANNEL NO. 5
Carol Greenman, Brooklyn

CABLE KNITS—The Sweater Channel.
Richard Schwartz, Madison, Wisc.
similarly: Christina Erpenbech, Scarscale, N.Y.;
Jack Labow, Barnegat Light, N.J.

SEITAN NOT SATAN—The Christian Vegetarian Network.
Alysha Cohen, N.Y.C.

AWARDS!—With J. D. Power and Associates.
similarly: Herb Hammer, N.Y.C.
Carleton Carpenter, Warwick, N.Y.

STARBUCKS—The Coffee Network.
Richard Nesbit, N.Y.C.

FAMILY LYNCHING
David Chasman, Beverly Hills, Calif.

THE DIRECTORY ASSISTANCE CHANNEL
David Rozenson, Newton, Mass.

KANGAROO COURT TV
Susan Harriman, San Francisco, Calif.
similarly: Joel Darrow, North Bergen, N.J.

THE ENGLISH CHANNEL
Louise Jackson, Somerset, Mass.
similarly: Ivan Freeman, N.Y.C.
Ken McCann, Somerset, N.J.

THE HOME SHARPTON NETWORK
Percy Allen, Boynton Beach, Fla.
similarly: Jeremy M. Parker, N.Y.C.

THE 666 CLUB
Marc Doyle, Newark, Del.

TVTV
Tom Frenkel, Sunnyside, N.Y.

THE MOURNING SHOW
Kevin Mellema, Falls Church, Va.

C-SPANISH
Carlos Hernandez, Kansas City, Mo.

VIDEO FREE EUROPE
Dede Persson, Mundelein, Ill.
similarly: Mark Sydel, N.Y.C.

PRAY PER VIEW
Thomas D. Warren, Hollywood Hills, Calif.

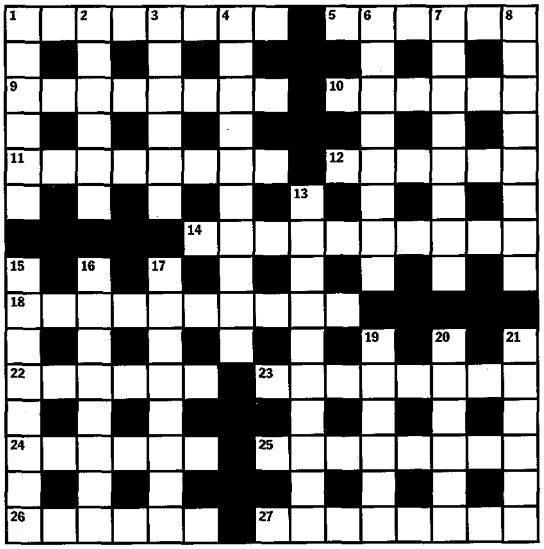
ALL-NIGHT SOLITAIRE
Alicia Ann Chomo, Wilmington, Del.

Rules: Postcards, please, typed if possible. **ONE ENTRY ONLY** to Competition Number 905, *New York* Magazine, 444 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022-6999. E-mail to 104700.2563@compuserve.com, **WITH STREET ADDRESS.** Entries must be received by March 13. Editor's decisions are final, and all entries become property of *New York.* Results and winners' names will appear in the April 14 issue.

The 'Guardian' Crossword

ACROSS

1 Mount really first-class horse. (8)
5 The way to dress for discotheque lighting. (6)
9 Extremely backward, but raise the largest families. (8)
10 Pop back with ring and charm. (6)
11 No-one left? That's good! (3,5)
12 Ancient coin held in trust—a terrible responsibility. (6)
14 Taking exceptional care, formed a group prepared to fight. (5,5)
18 Shut up and stay on, though it's a bloomer. (10)
22 A tap to go in a rotisserie. (6)
23 To walk around is bliss. (8)
24 A number call back—sharp! (6)
25 Go along with cash and new dice. (8)
26 One-time holiday accommodation area. (6)
27 Taking look after look shows sense. (8)



DOWN

1 Clean up and cover the canvas. (6)
2 Building on firm foundations. (6)
3 Airmen forced to stay behind. (6)
4 Shoots the underworld boss over allegations made. (10)
6 Reward the personnel officer. (8)
7 Six balls bowled with spin can result in defeat. (8)
8 Increased by five hundred following general reorganisation. (8)
13 Back-cover a politician used for withdrawing. (10)
15 The renegade given a job scoffed. (8)
16 Crooked, so could well be in credit. (8)
17 A European schoolboy can get round the school-head. (8)
19 Boasts few connections. (6)
20 Tip-top jewellery for the show-off. (6)
21 Abandon an unproductive piece of land. (6)

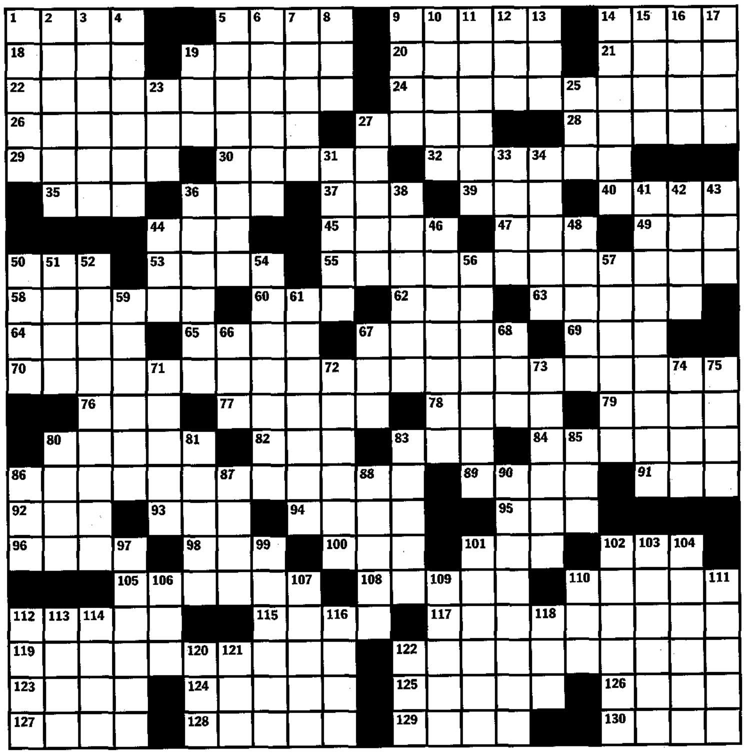
'Horrors! II': 'Cue' Crossword • By Maura B. Jacobson

ACROSS

1 Verb with "thou"
5 Shah Jahan's city
9 Reporter's exclusive
14 Howls at the moon
18 Spillane's "—— Jury"
19 Calif. collegian
20 Dried coconut meat
21 Maui meal
22 Peter Straub's best-seller
24 Site of Jay Anson's "Horror"
26 Shirley Jackson's haunted locale
27 Portent
28 Came to a conclusion
29 Golf great
30 —— as a beet
32 Braced oneself
35 Parts of ozs.
36 Crafty
37 One of the Turners
39 Nursery-rhyme Margery
40 Bro and sis
44 Cambodia's Lon
45 Used a garden tool
47 Blast with a ray gun
49 Greek nickname
50 Spider's parlor
53 He played Hopalong Cassidy
55 H.G. Wells's mad doctor
58 "Today I ——"
60 Computer key
62 An avis lays them
63 In a morose manner
64 Effect a makeover
65 Leisure
67 Do it at the Savoy
69 Item for 29-Across
70 Poe chiller, with "The"
76 Opposite of neath
77 Appraise ore
78 Actor Joel Mc——
79 Give temporarily
80 Take down the sails
82 Hebrides hat
83 Neptune's domain
84 "Questions" number
86 Monster tale of 1818
89 Ratio words
91 Rules to follow
92 Shastri of India
93 From —— Z
94 Rubik of the cube craze
95 Charlie, codewise
96 Early auto designer
98 Dadaism pioneer
100 Prefix for charge or tax
101 Spain's El ——
102 Wasn't a standee
105 Acid-base indicator
108 No longer fresh
110 Capital of Ghana
112 Boston fish favorite
115 Graf of naval fame
117 J. B. Priestley eerie opus
119 Title weirdos of Roald Dahl
122 Thriller by Cornell Woolrich
123 Of the best quality
124 Safe place
125 Where to wait for the Robert E. Lee
126 Between happily and after
127 Better than fair
128 Cider source
129 Very, in Versailles
130 Lap dog, familiarly

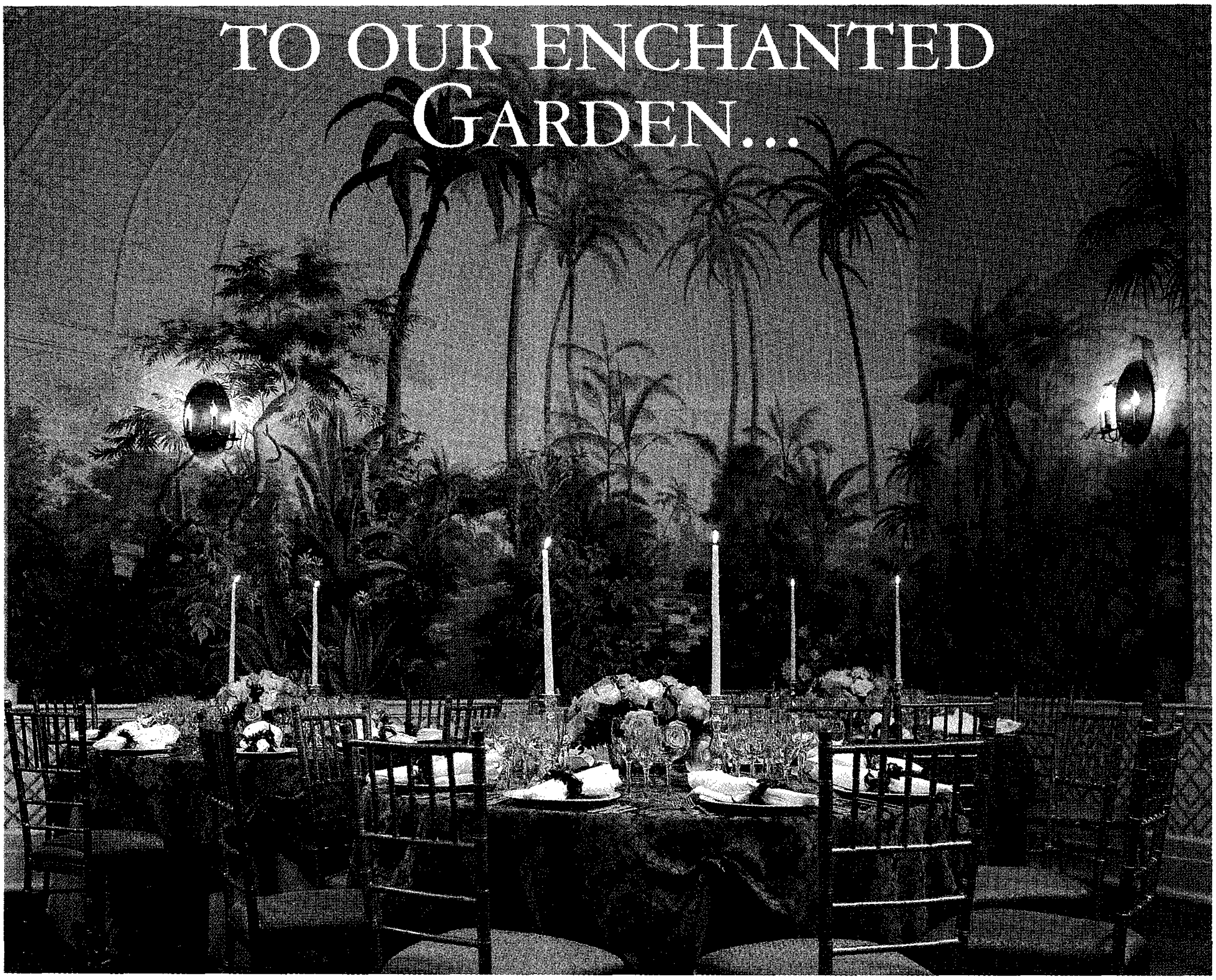
DOWN

1 Peak stock prices
2 "—— of beauty is a joy . . .": Keats
3 Author Asch
4 Edison colleague, and family
5 In reality
6 Kind of photo-print finish
7 More undercooked
8 No matter which
9 Con game
10 Sky streaker
11 Voiced a view
12 Plate scraping
13 See the cashier
14 Louvers
15 Onetime, to Burns
16 Ivy League biggie
17 Made a case of it
19 G.I. hospitality center
23 Clergyman's deg.
25 Churchill's sign
27 Ancient Athenian theater
31 Moral precept
33 Hitlerite
34 Mops the deck
36 Oklahoma resident
38 Dedicate oneself (to)
41 Macabre story by Richard Matheson
42 Hee-haw
43 Religious violation
44 Hoop gp.
46 Split up legally
48 Aristotle's teacher
50 Less than hot
51 "Down under" bird
52 John Holbrook Vance novel
54 Ceases to act, with "from"
56 Japanese warrior
57 '20s channel swimmer
59 Not old-fashioned
61 Having feelings
66 Third king of Judah
67 Owing the pot, in poker
68 —— Wee Reese
71 Thomas Mann's daughter
72 Broncobusters
73 Bordered a picture
74 "Lamp —— My Feet"
75 Ice-cream brand
80 River to the Caspian
81 Apply oneself to
83 Inhale a drug
85 Trouble
86 Ziegfeld, to friends
87 Average standard
88 Being utilized
90 Laboratory courses
97 Lost speed
99 Fitness exercise
101 Hew apart
102 Lug
103 On the go
104 "Jeopardy!" emcee
106 Ugandan first name
107 Say the letters of
109 Better qualified
110 Aly Khan's father
111 C'est —— *(that is to say: Fr.)*
112 Doe's beau
113 Toy-train sound
114 Las Vegas rival
116 Ruler of Ferrara, once
118 Dwight, informally
120 1933 dam agcy.
121 Gown's go-with
122 Short-order sandwich



Solutions to last week's puzzles appear on page 92.

COME IN TO OUR ENCHANTED GARDEN...



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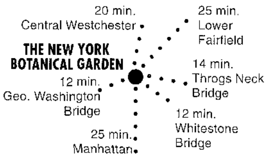
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Central Westchester
25 min.
Lower
Fairfield
THE NEW YORK
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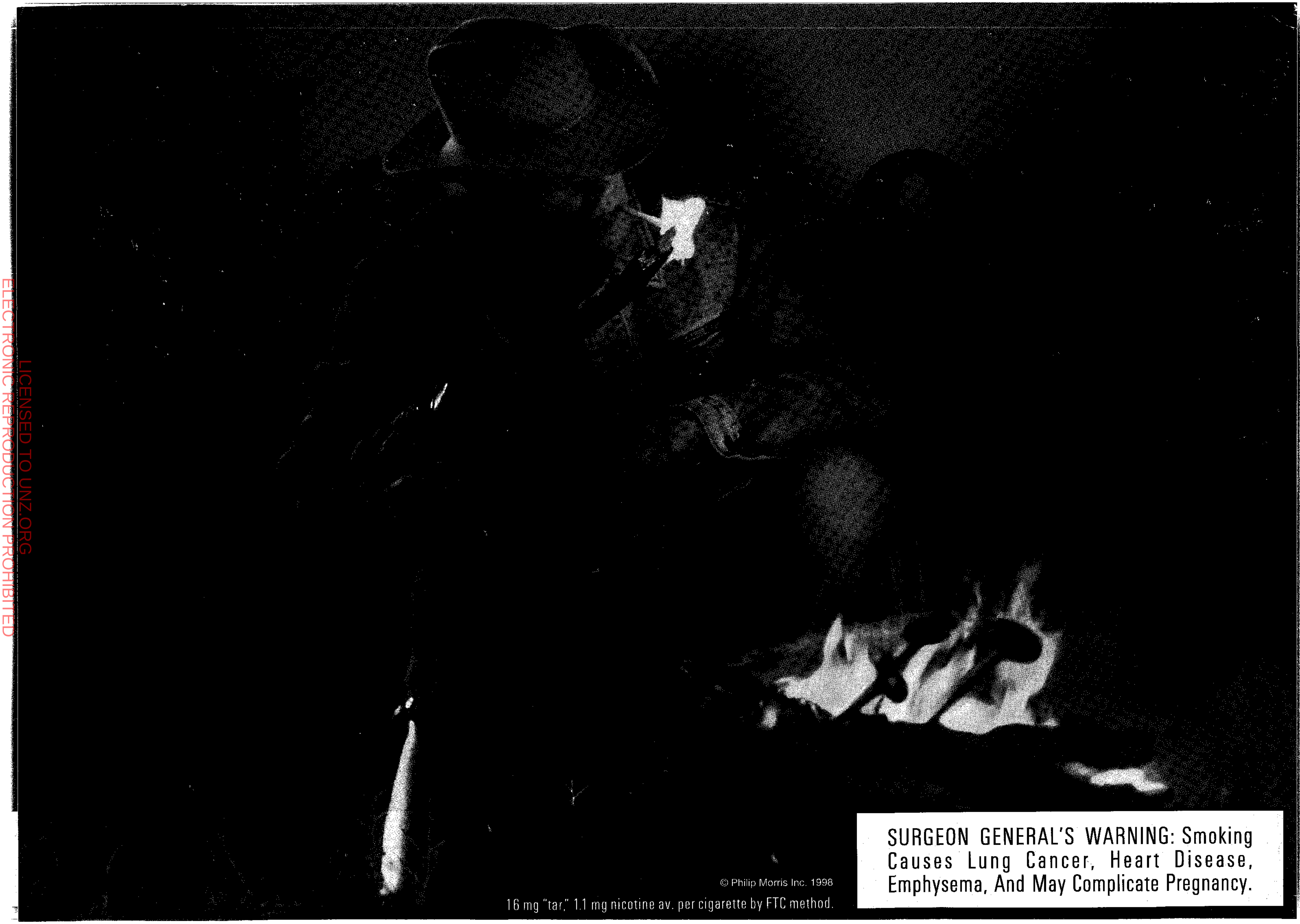
14 min.
Throgs Neck
Bridge
12 min.
Geo. Washington
Bridge
12 min.
Whitestone
Bridge
25 min.
Manhattan



SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING: Smoking Causes Lung Cancer, Heart Disease, Emphysema, And May Complicate Pregnancy.

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16 mg "tar," 1.1 mg nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.